

CHOICE OF FRIENDS

Narayana, the author of these parables, insists that we exercise caution when choosing our companions. His charming animal characters – sometimes silly, sometimes wise – remind us of ourselves. We learn to avoid the pitfalls of life, along with his animal characters, thus attaining wisdom in a rather enjoyable way! Most importantly, we realise the worth of an honest friend.

OTHER ACK FABLES & HUMOUR:

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**BIRBAL TO
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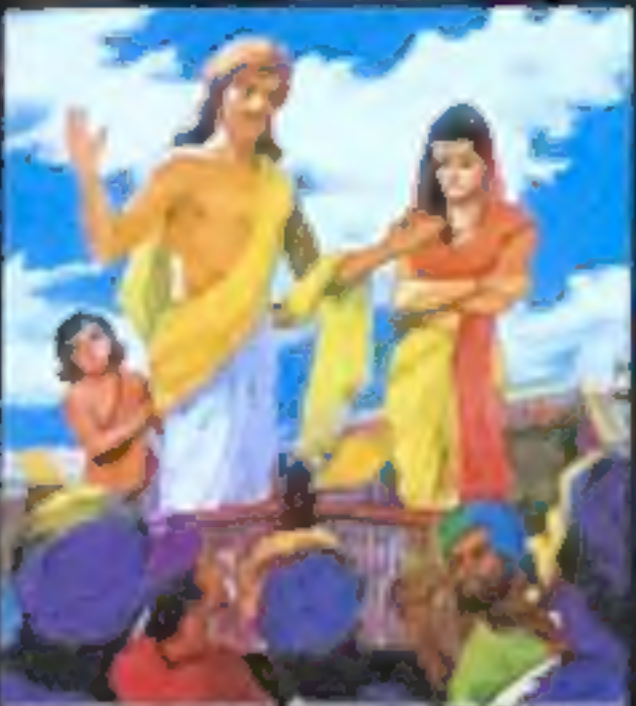


**THE JACKAL AND
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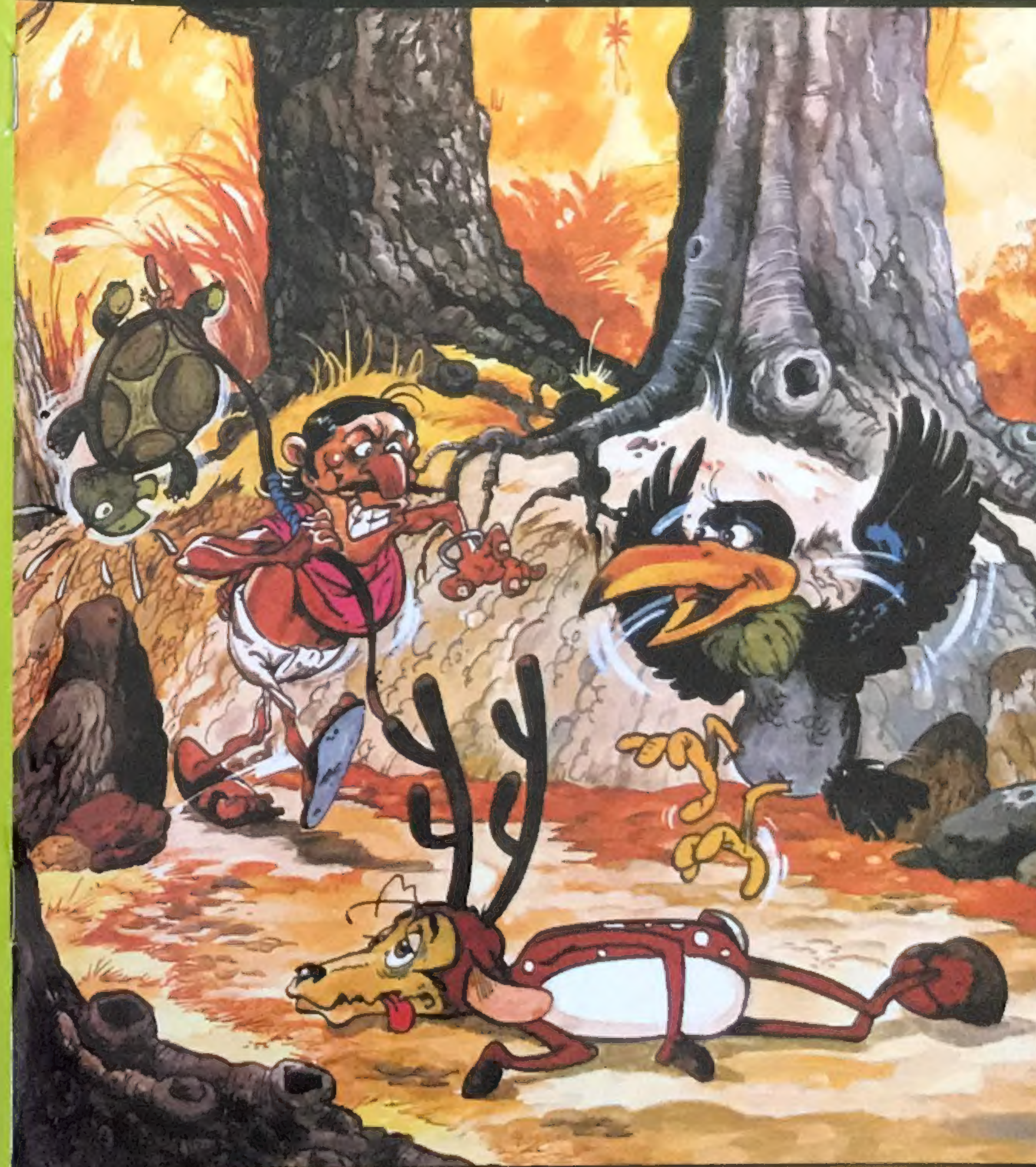
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CHOICE OF FRIENDS

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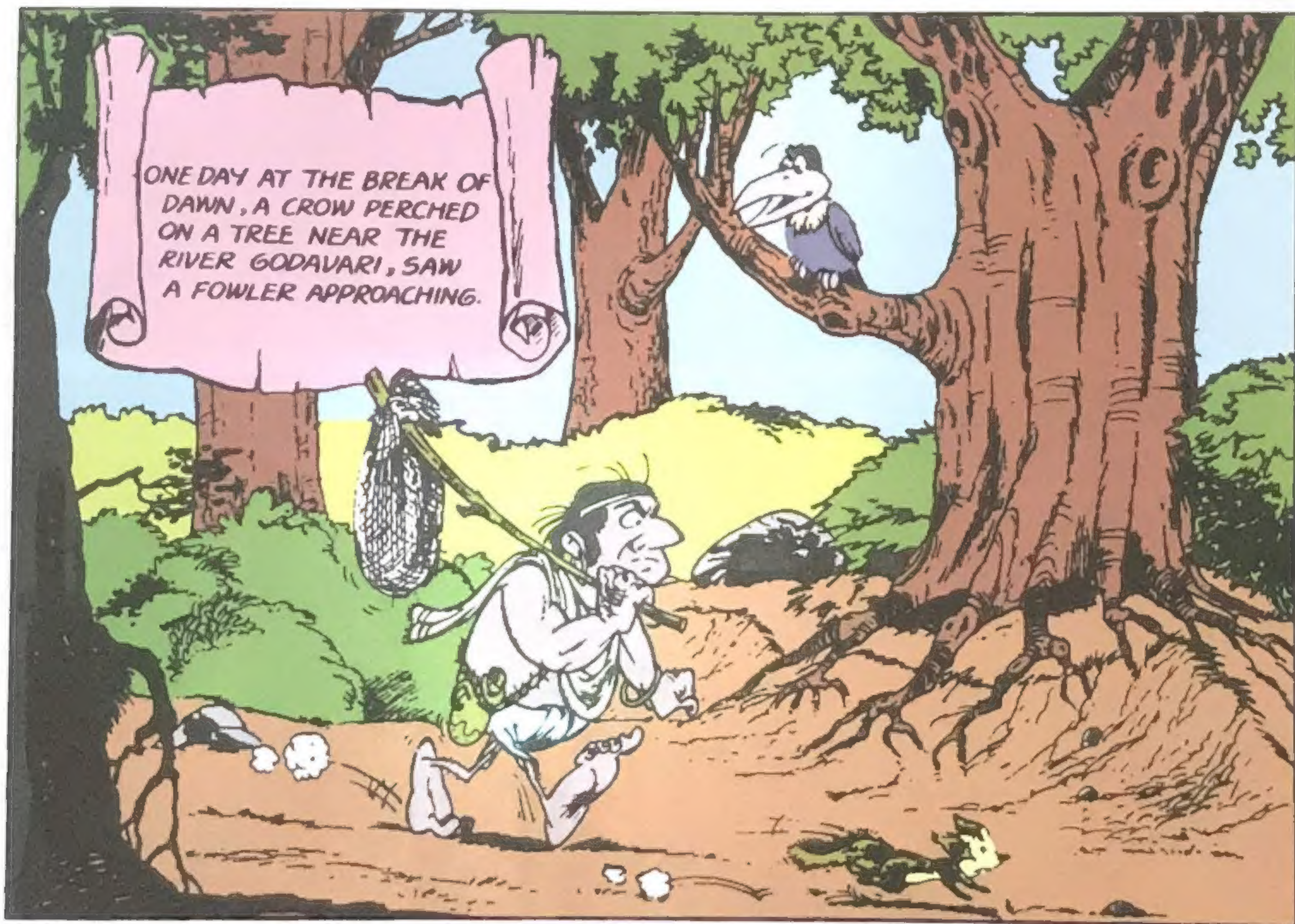
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CHOICE OF FRIENDS

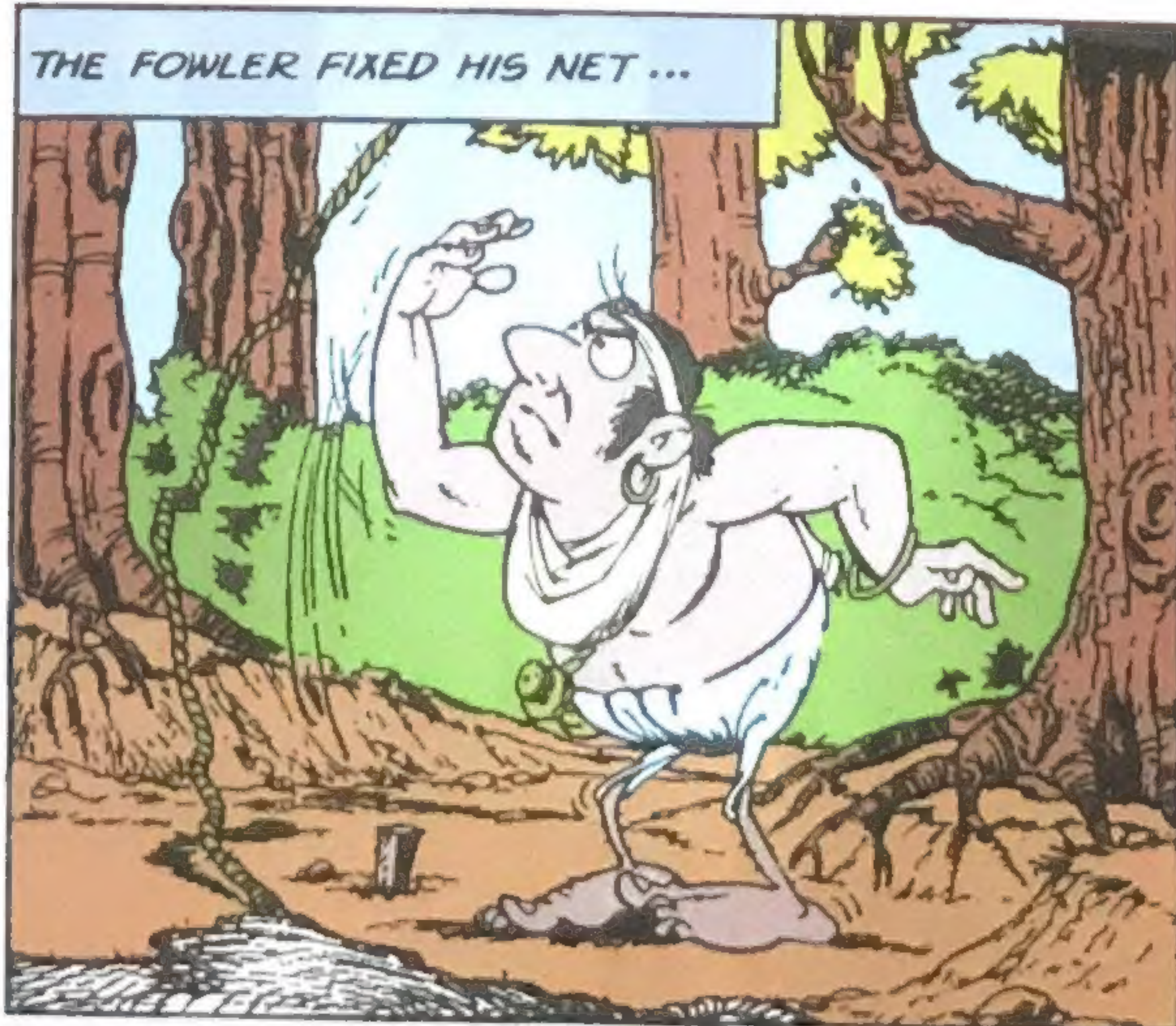
ONE DAY AT THE BREAK OF DAWN, A CROW PERCHED ON A TREE NEAR THE RIVER GODAVARI, SAW A FOWLER APPROACHING.



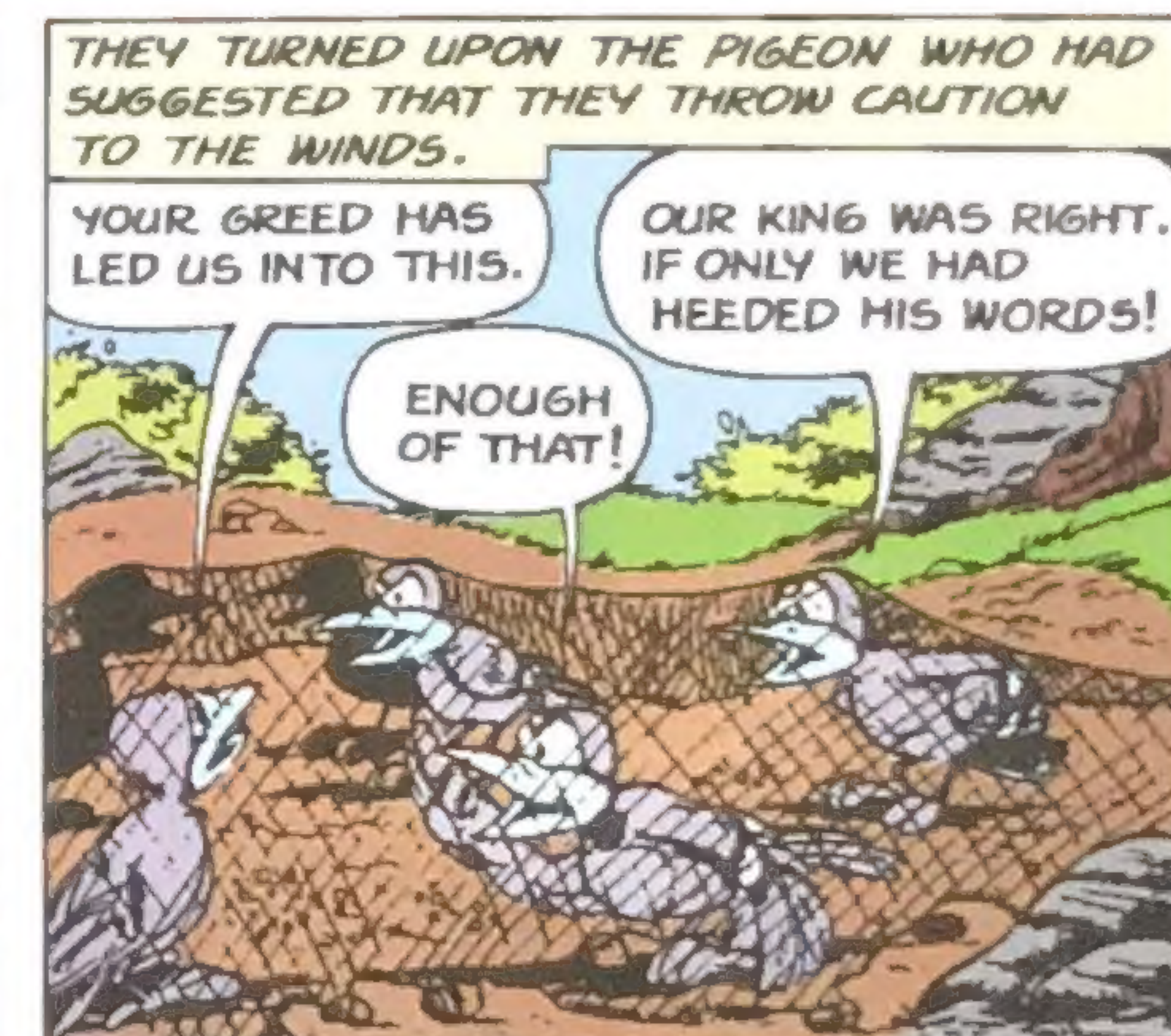
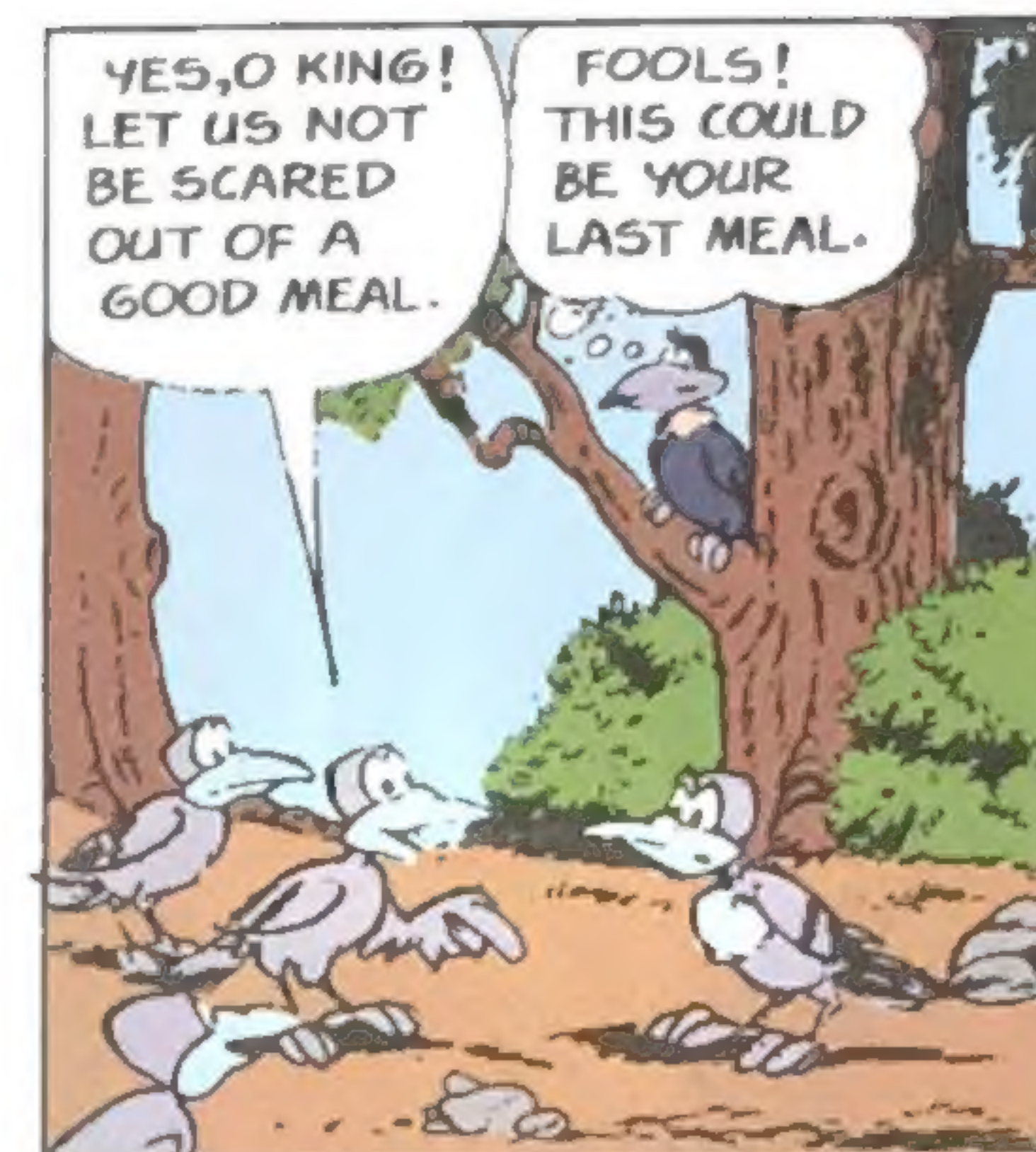
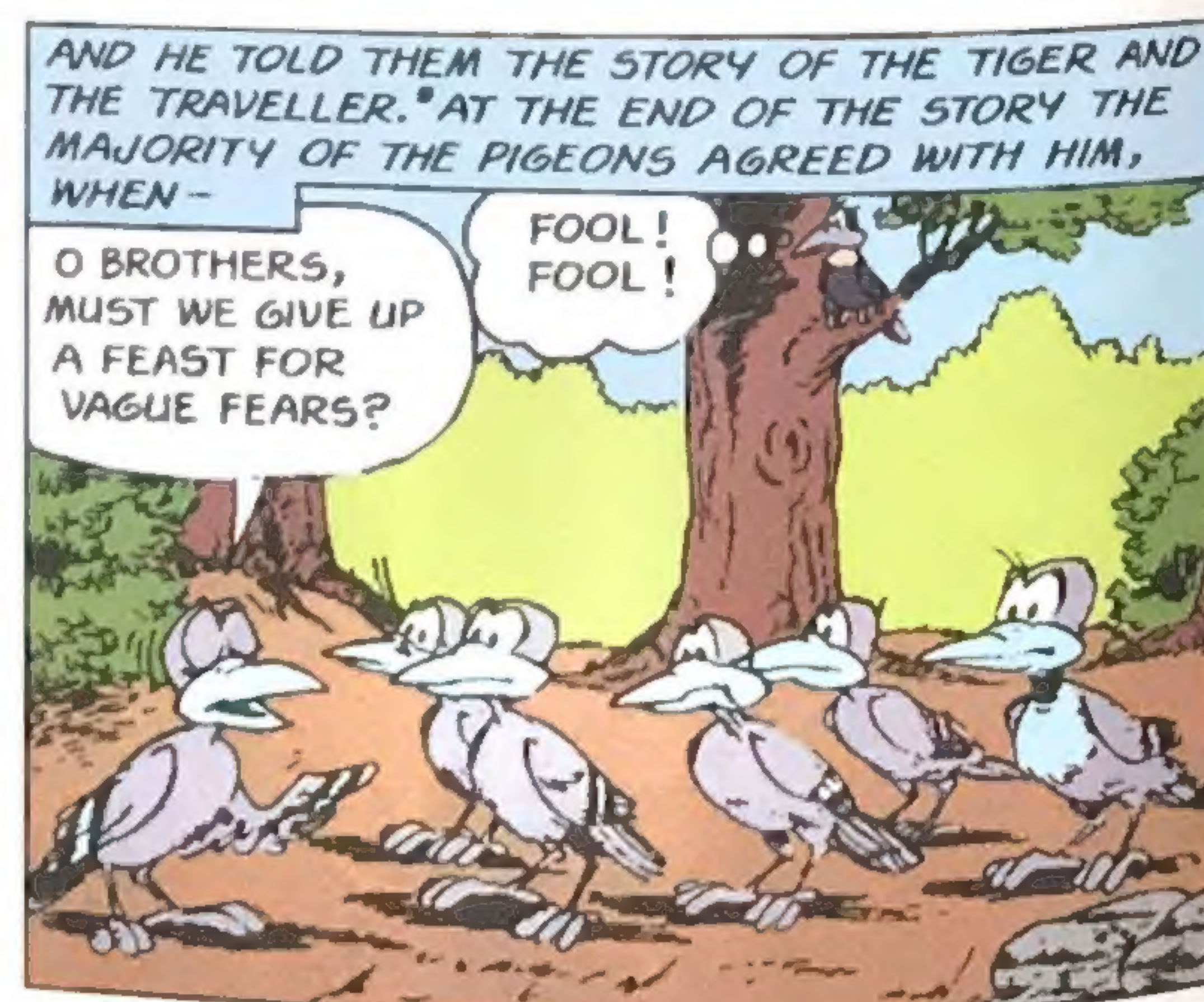
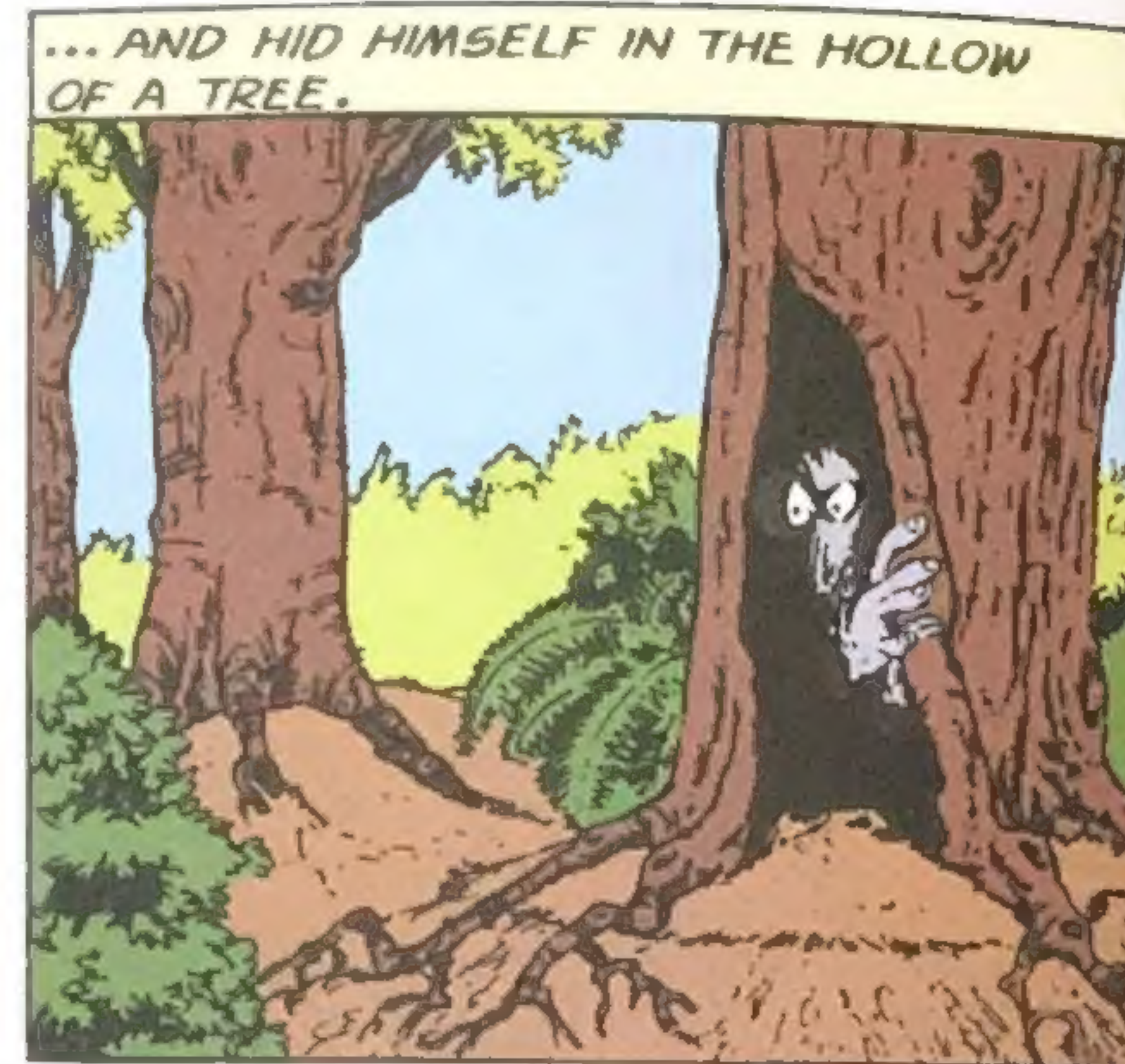
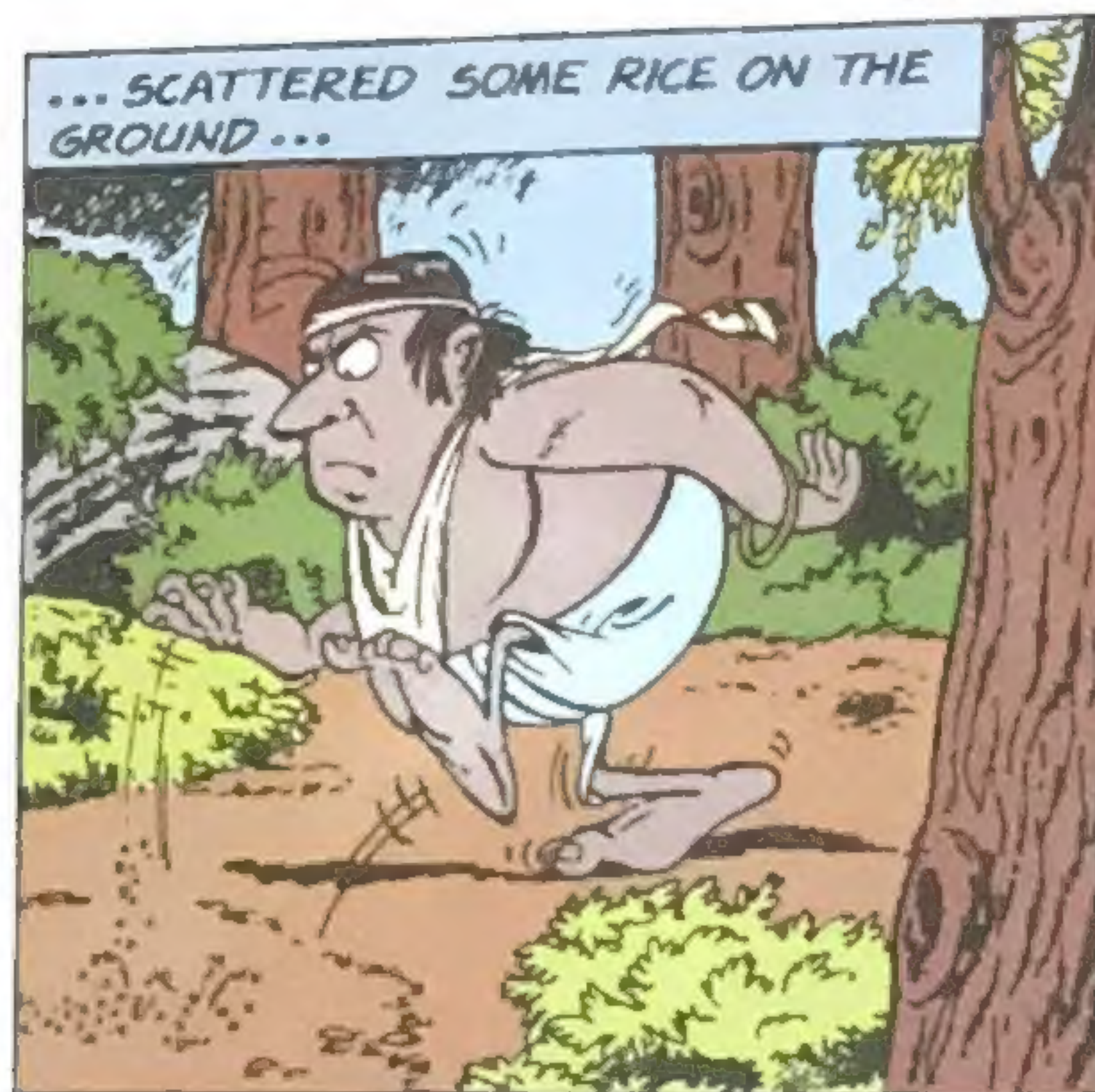
O LORD! HERE COMES YAMA* IN PERSON. I WONDER WHAT HE IS UP TO.

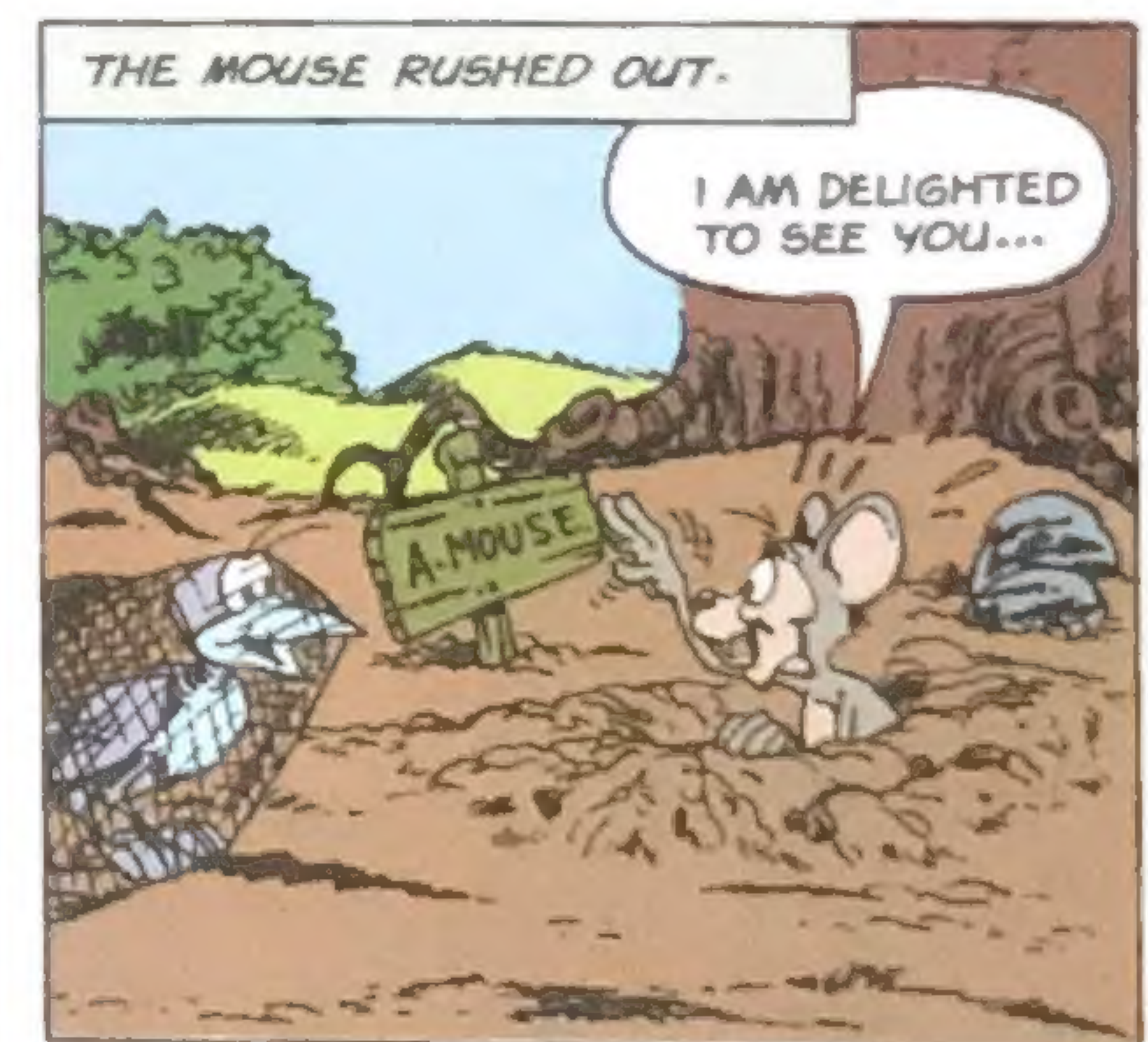
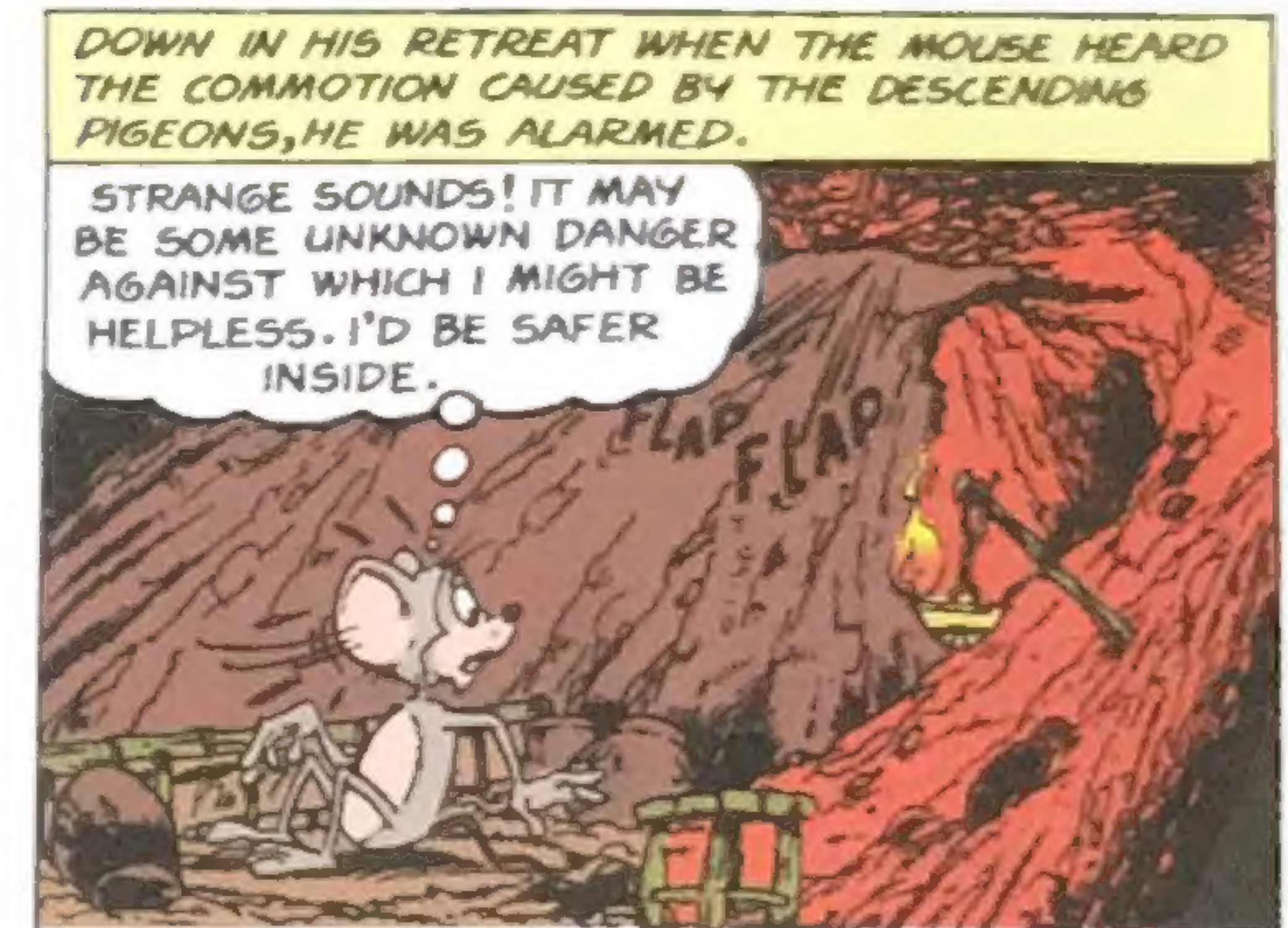
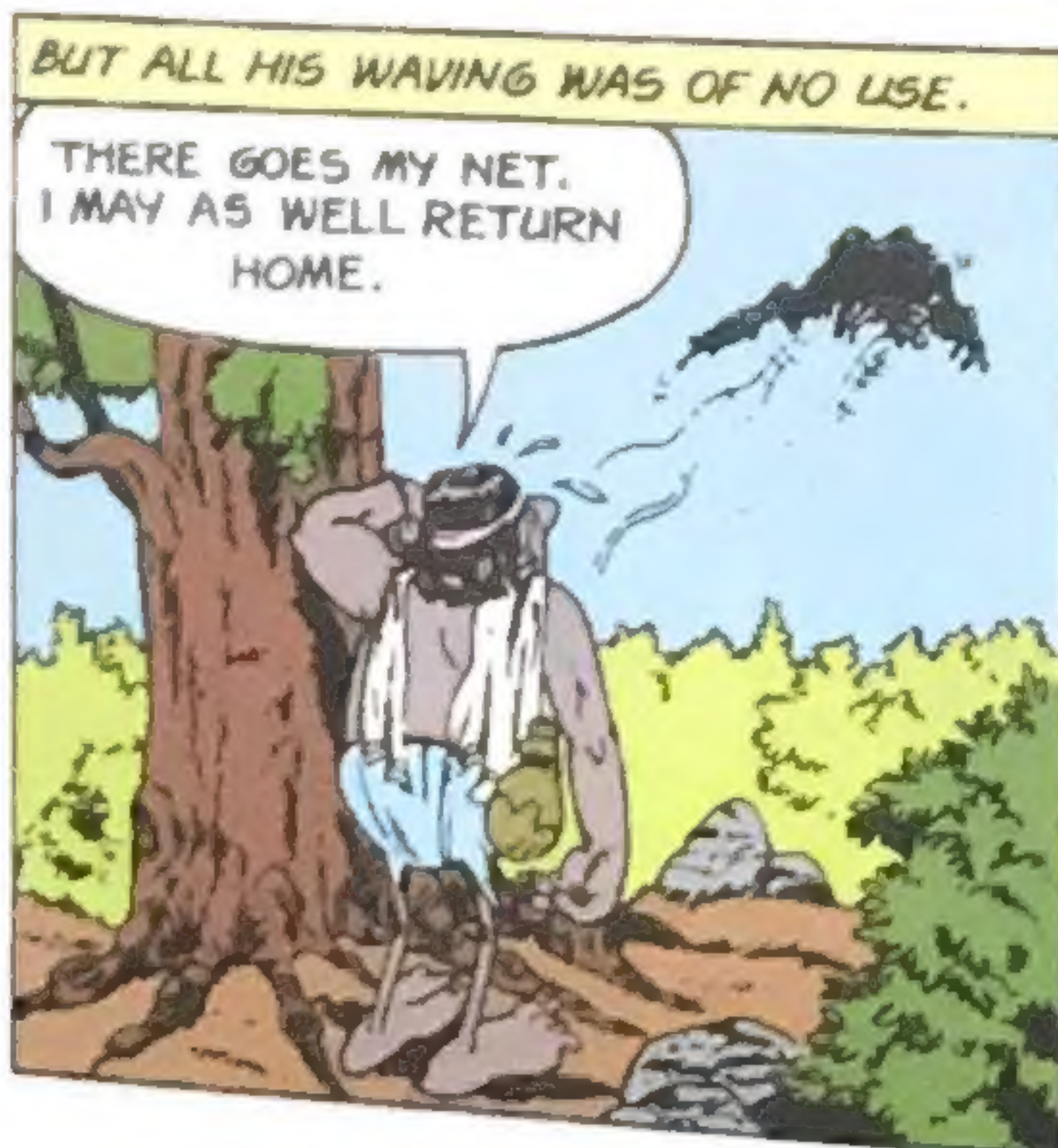
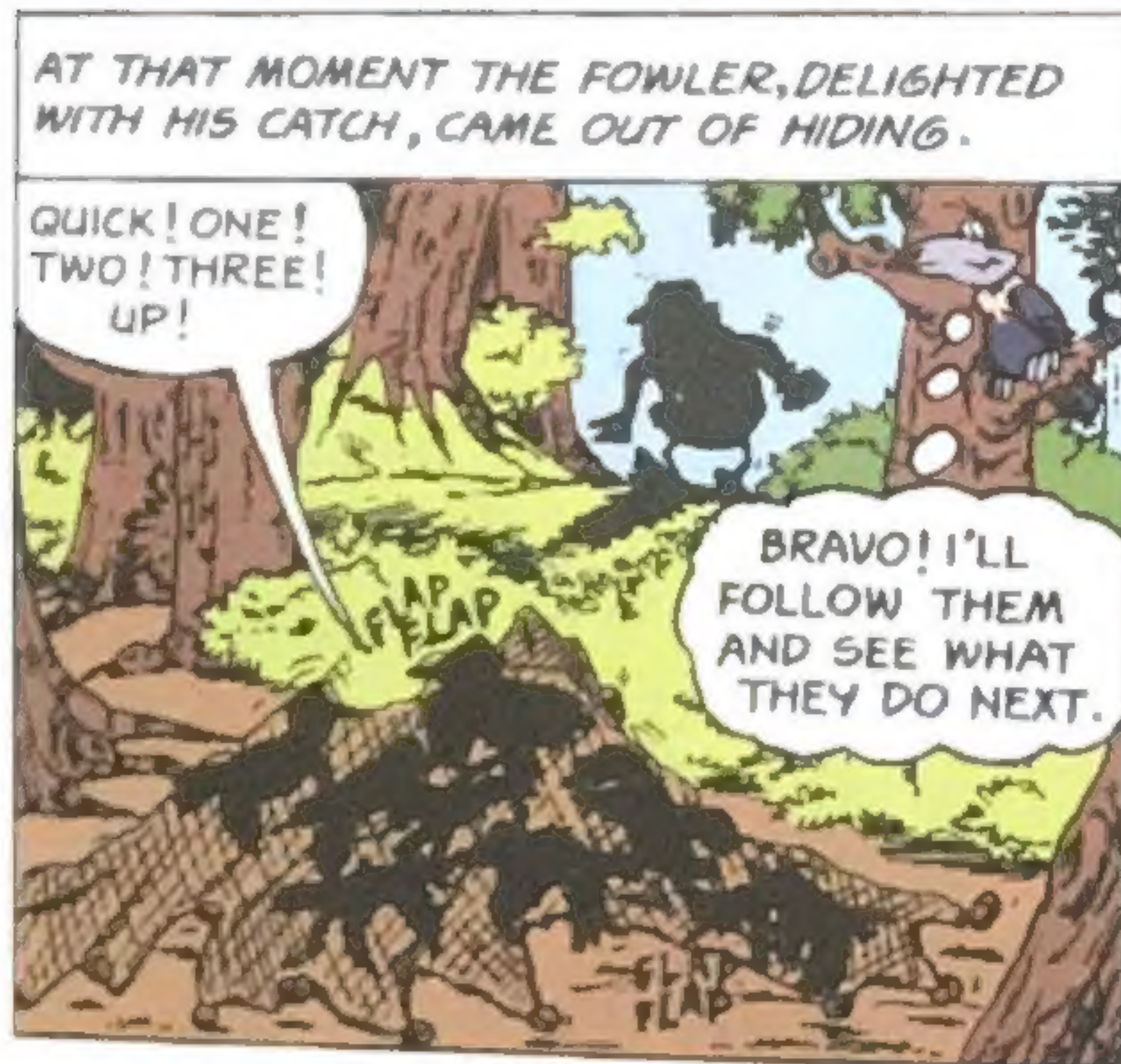
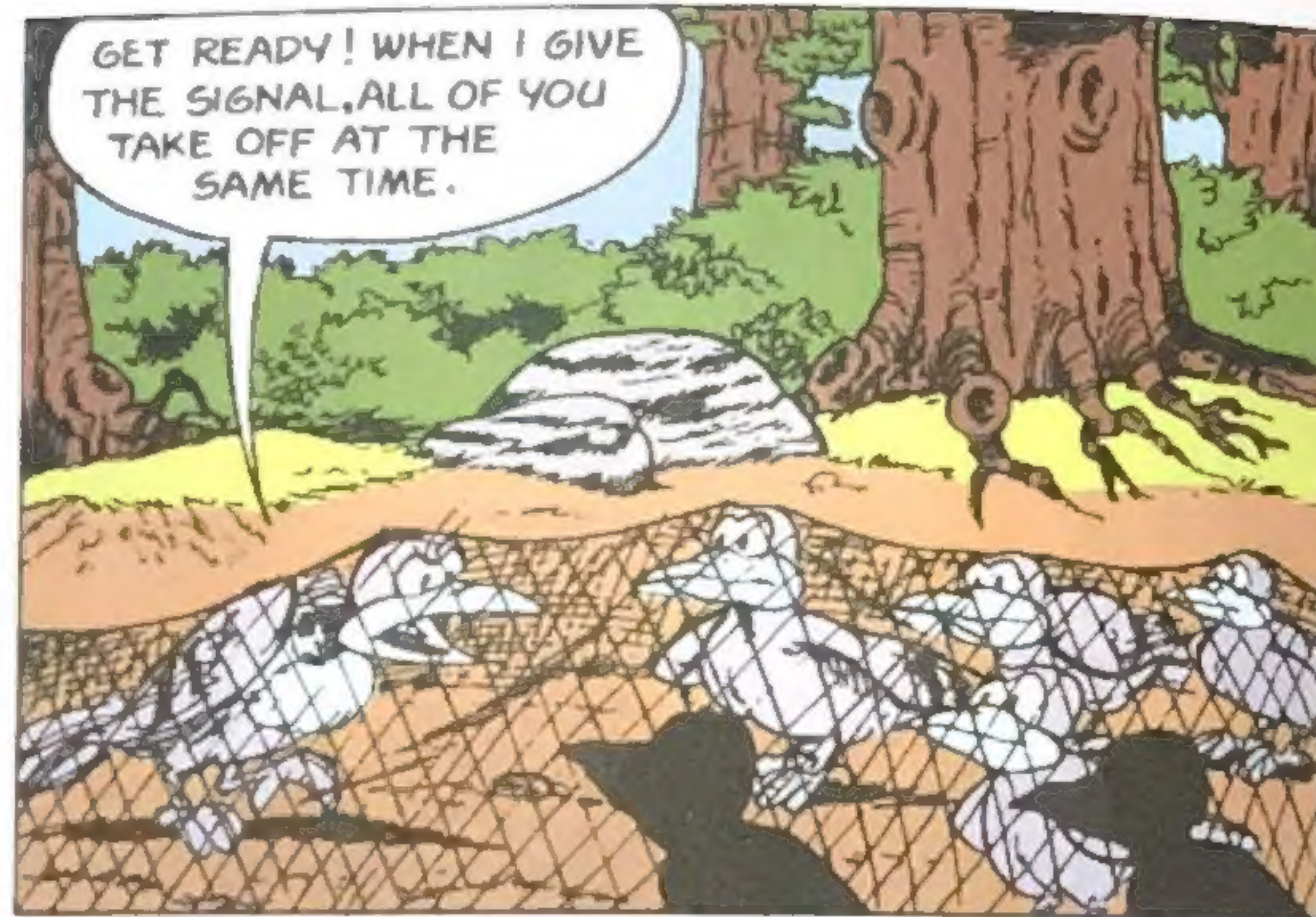
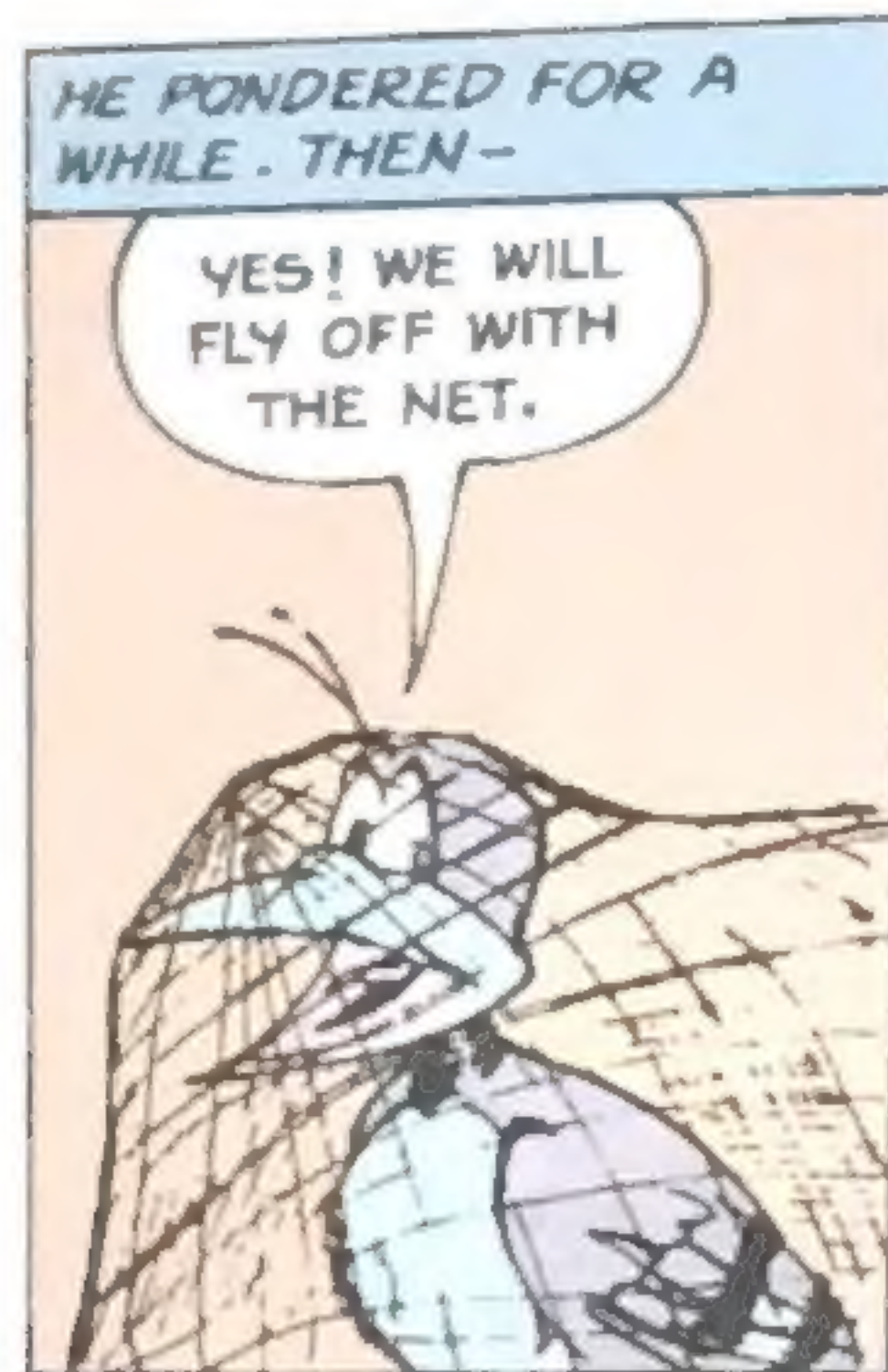


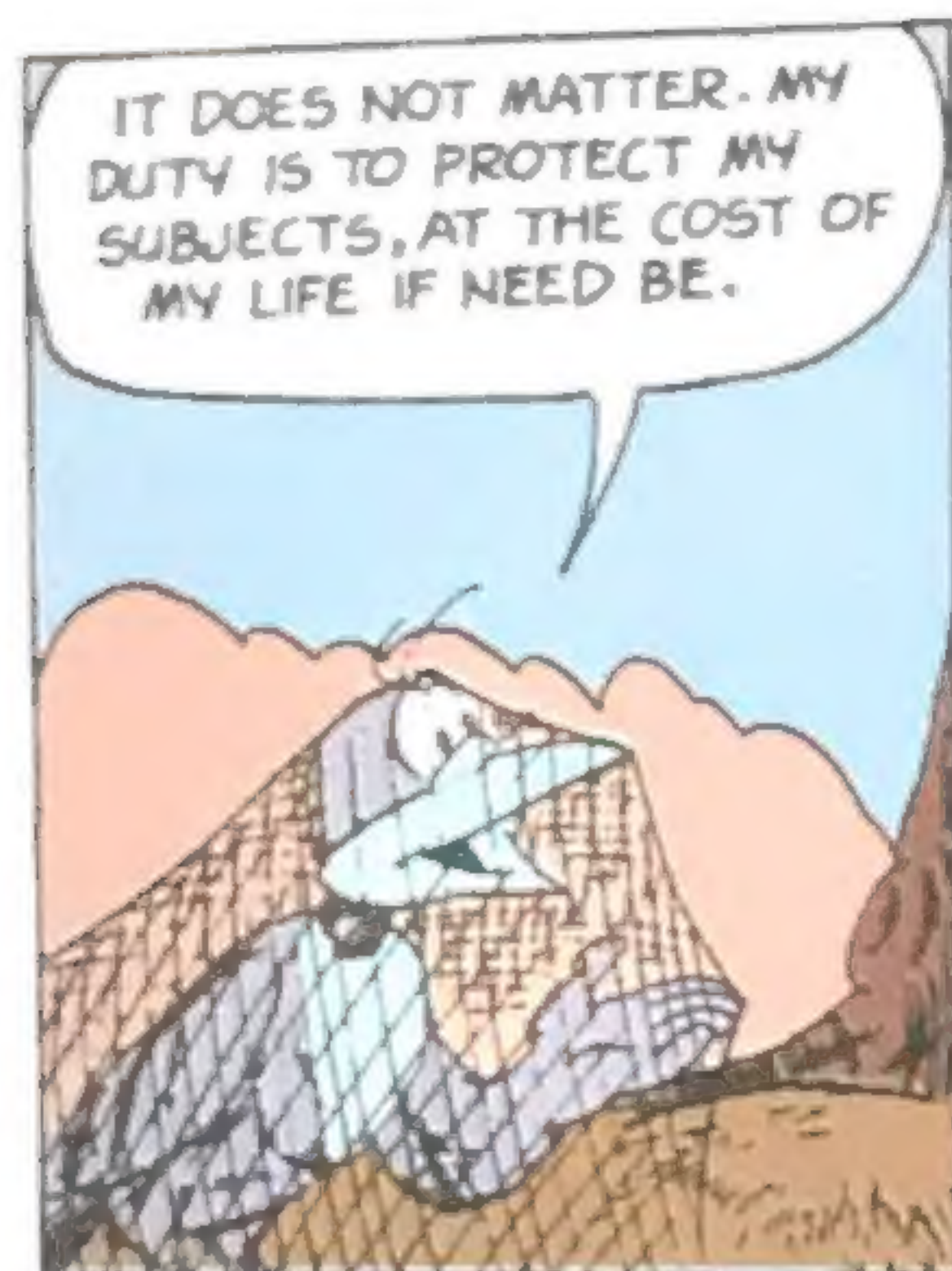
THE FOWLER FIXED HIS NET ...



* THE GOD OF DEATH.







IT DOES NOT MATTER. MY DUTY IS TO PROTECT MY SUBJECTS, AT THE COST OF MY LIFE IF NEED BE.

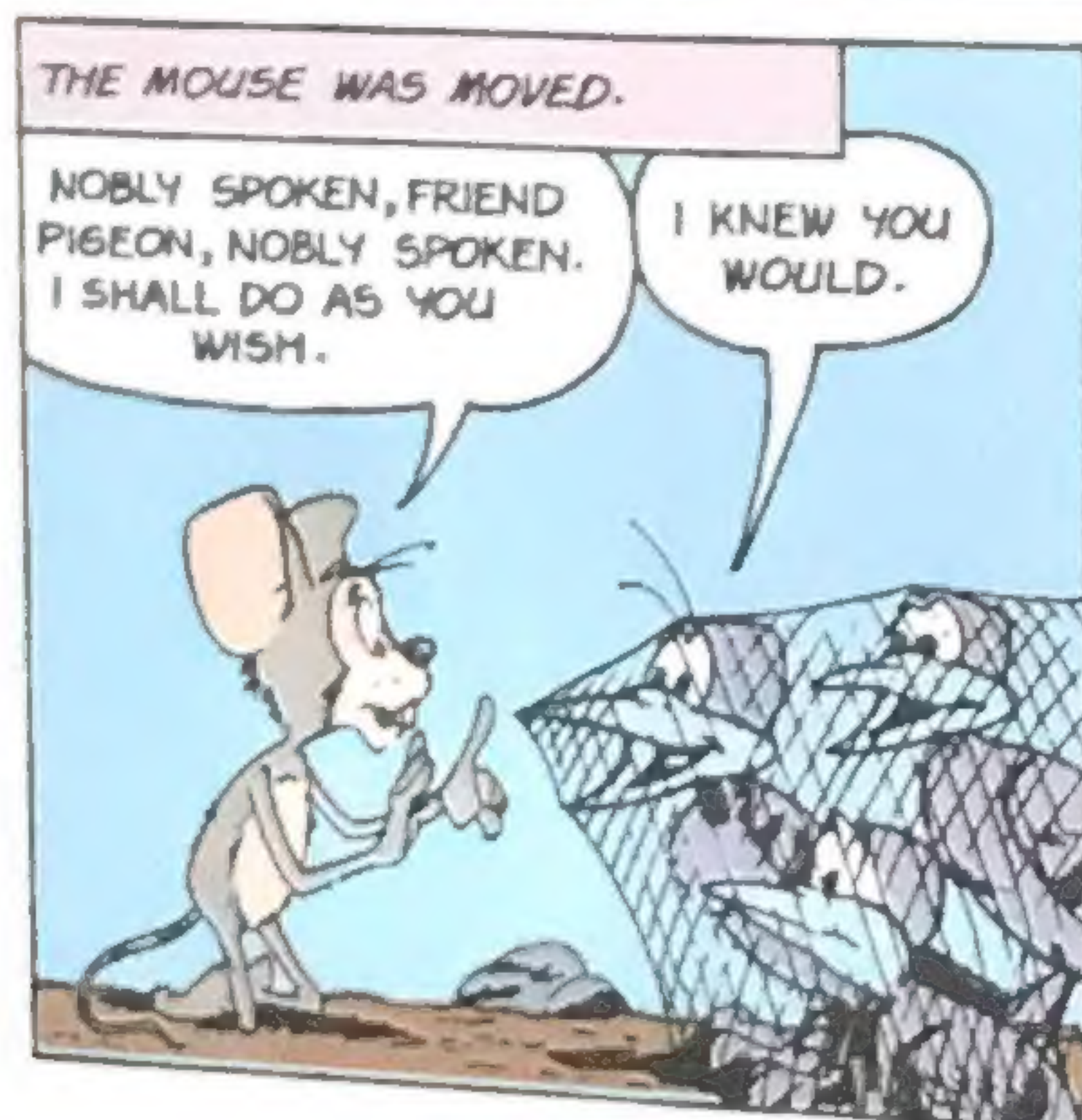


NO! NO! I WILL FIRST FREE YOU. AND THEN ATTEND TO THE OTHERS. IT IS NOT WISE TO SACRIFICE ONESELF TO PRESERVE ONE'S DEPENDANTS.



THAT MAY BE TRUE. BUT DEATH WHICH COMES TO ALL COMES NOBLY WHEN WE GIVE OUR LIFE, OUR ALL, TO SAVE ANOTHER'S LIFE. YOU WILL FREE THEM FIRST.

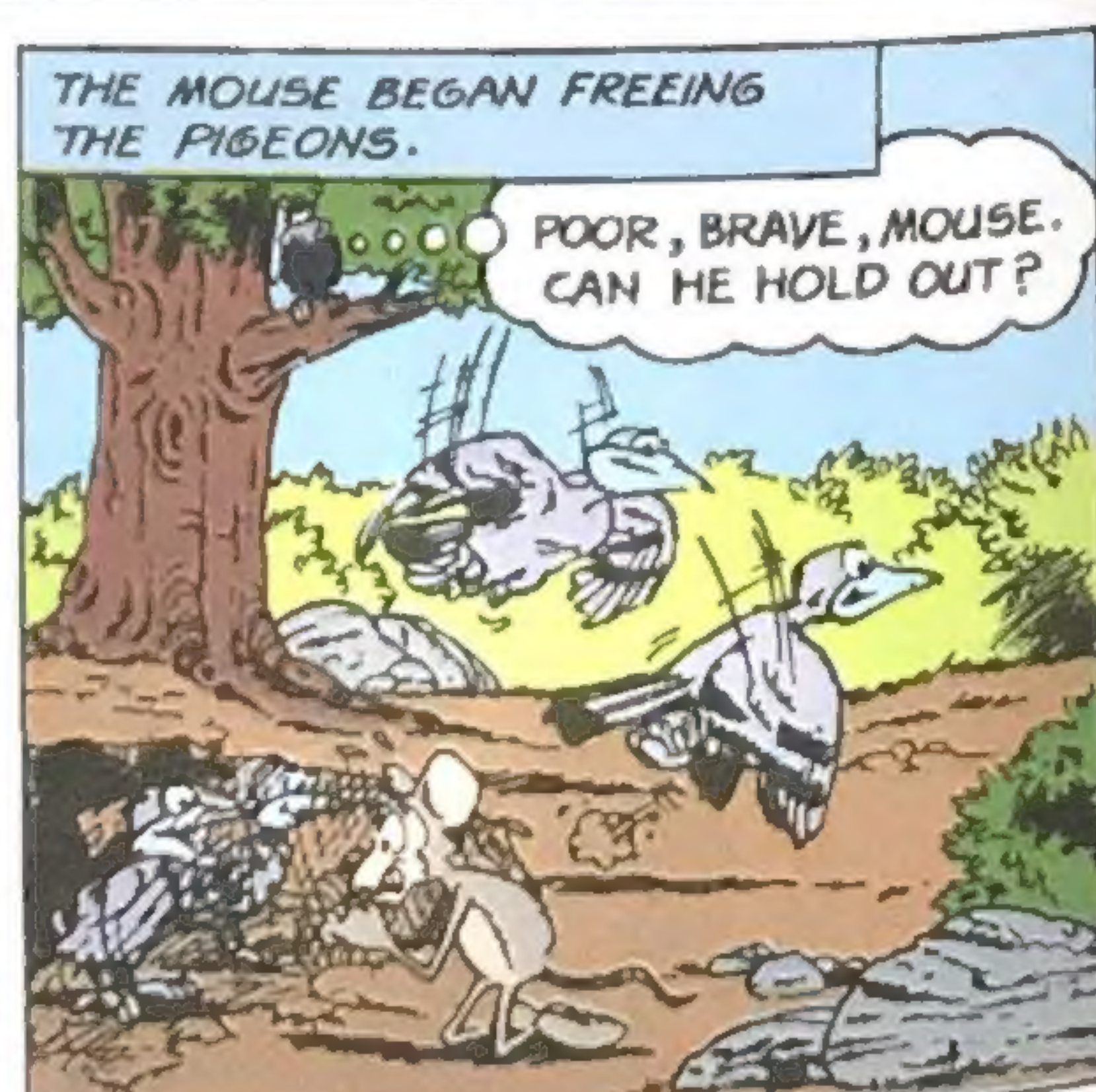
SUCH NOBILITY IS RARE.



THE MOUSE WAS MOVED.

NOBLY SPOKEN, FRIEND PIGEON, NOBLY SPOKEN. I SHALL DO AS YOU WISH.

I KNEW YOU WOULD.



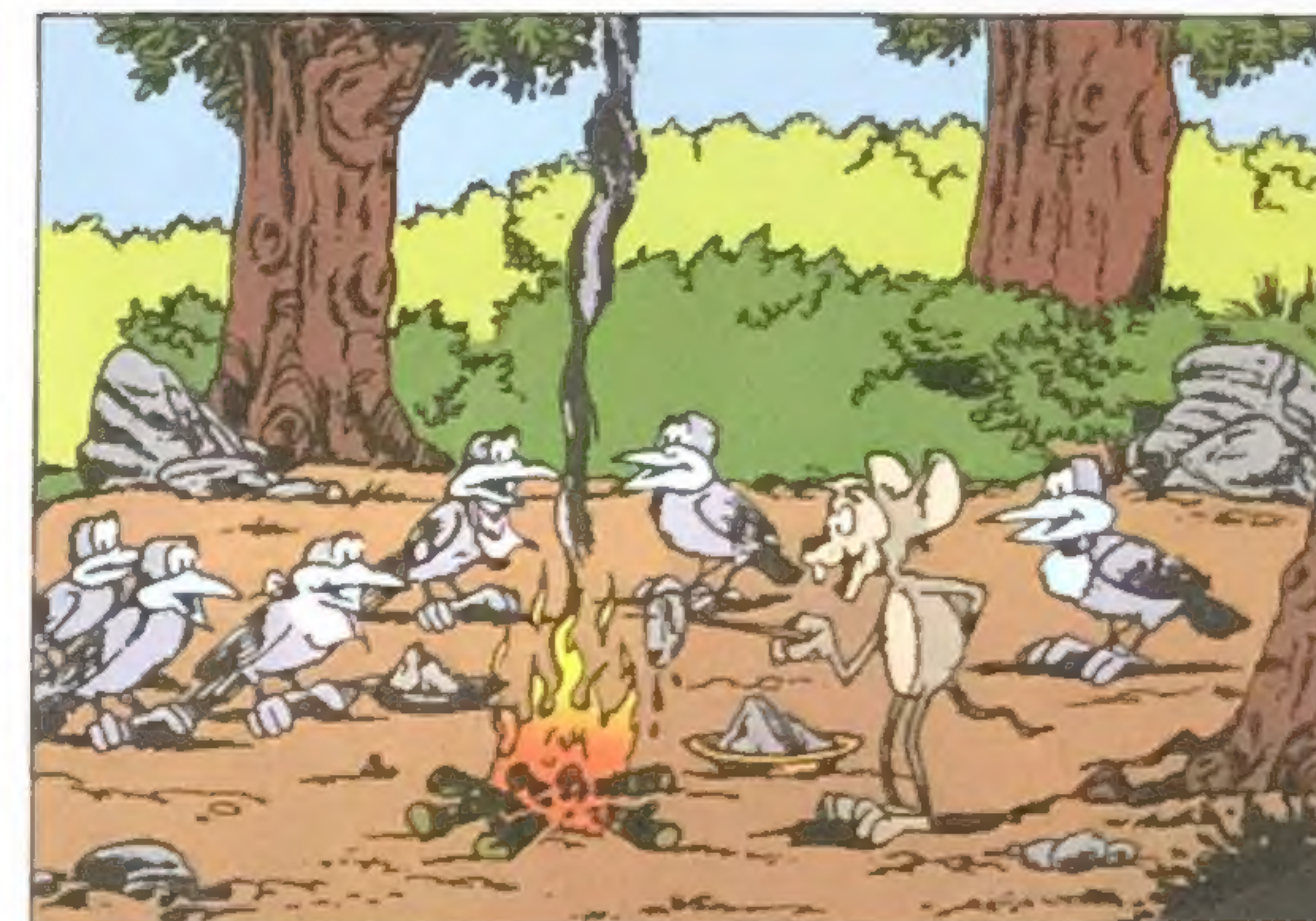
THE MOUSE BEGAN FREEING THE PIGEONS.

POOR, BRAVE, MOUSE. CAN HE HOLD OUT?

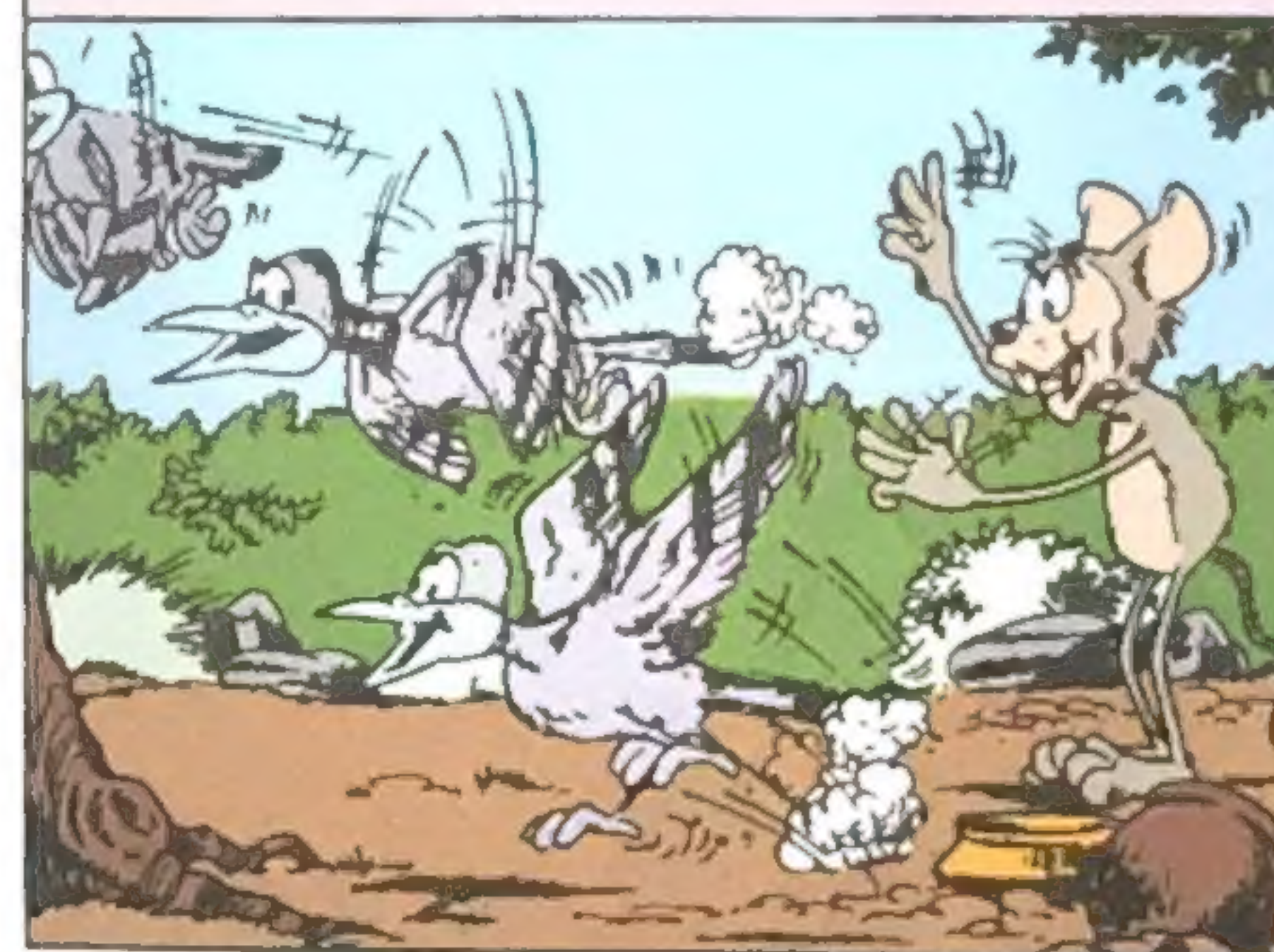
THE MOUSE DID HOLD OUT. HIS FRIEND'S NOBILITY GAVE HIM THE STRENGTH.

AS SOON AS YOU ARE FREE, YOU MUST LET ME TREAT YOU AND YOUR FOLLOWERS TO A FEAST.

A TRUE FRIEND INDEED. I WILL MAKE HIM MY FRIEND TOO.



THEN, THANKING THE MOUSE, THE PIGEON AND HIS FOLLOWERS FLEW AWAY.



AS THE MOUSE WAS ABOUT TO GO BACK TO HIS RETREAT, THE CROW FLEW DOWN TO HIM.

O STAUNCH FRIEND, LET ME TOO BE YOUR FRIEND.



THE MOUSE WAS AMUSED.

HOW CAN THAT BE? I AM YOUR NATURAL FOOD. THE NEXT THING I KNOW, YOU WILL BE EATING ME. WE CAN NEVER BE FRIENDS.

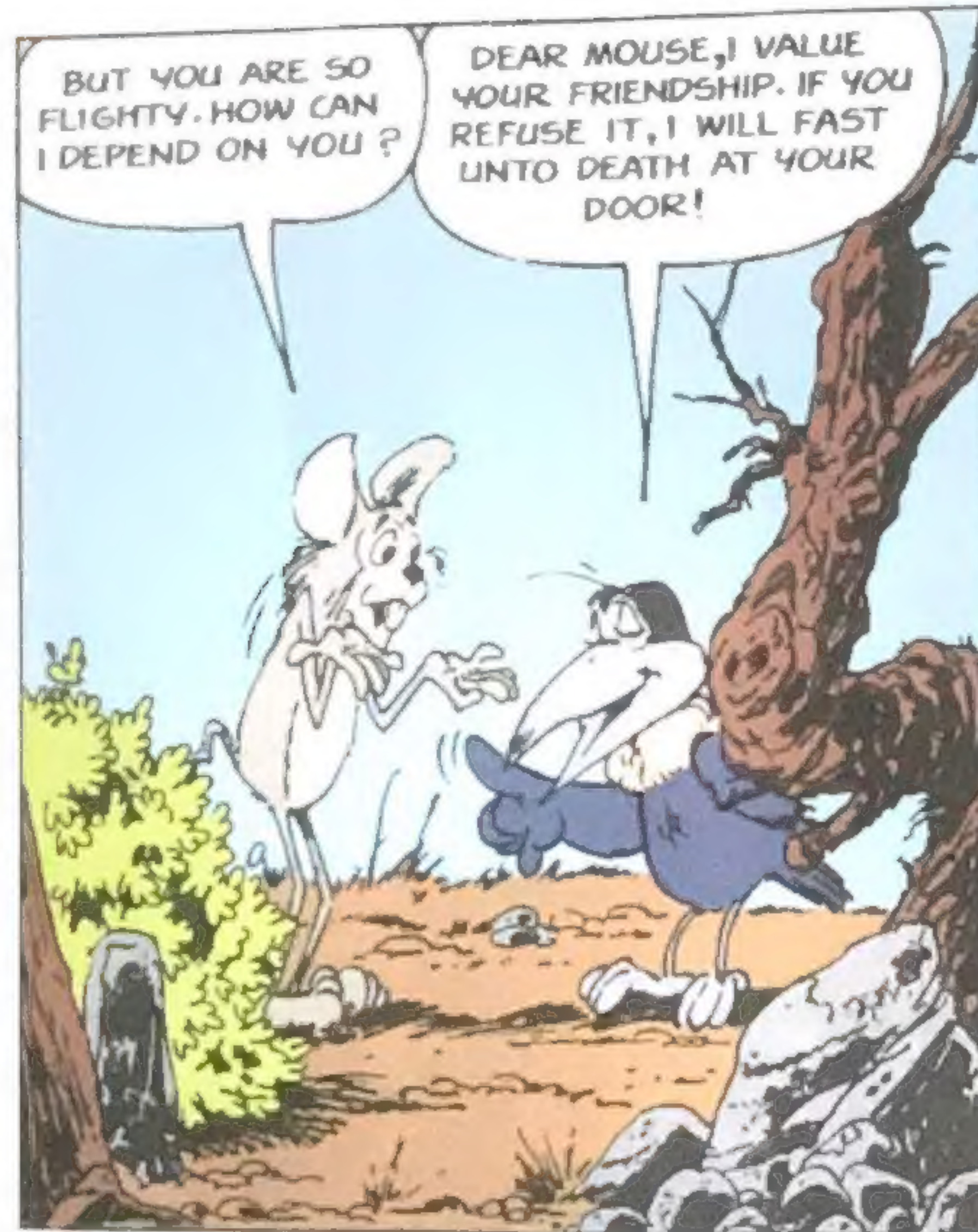


AND THE MOUSE TOLD HIM THE STORY OF THE DEER, THE JACKAL AND THE CROW.

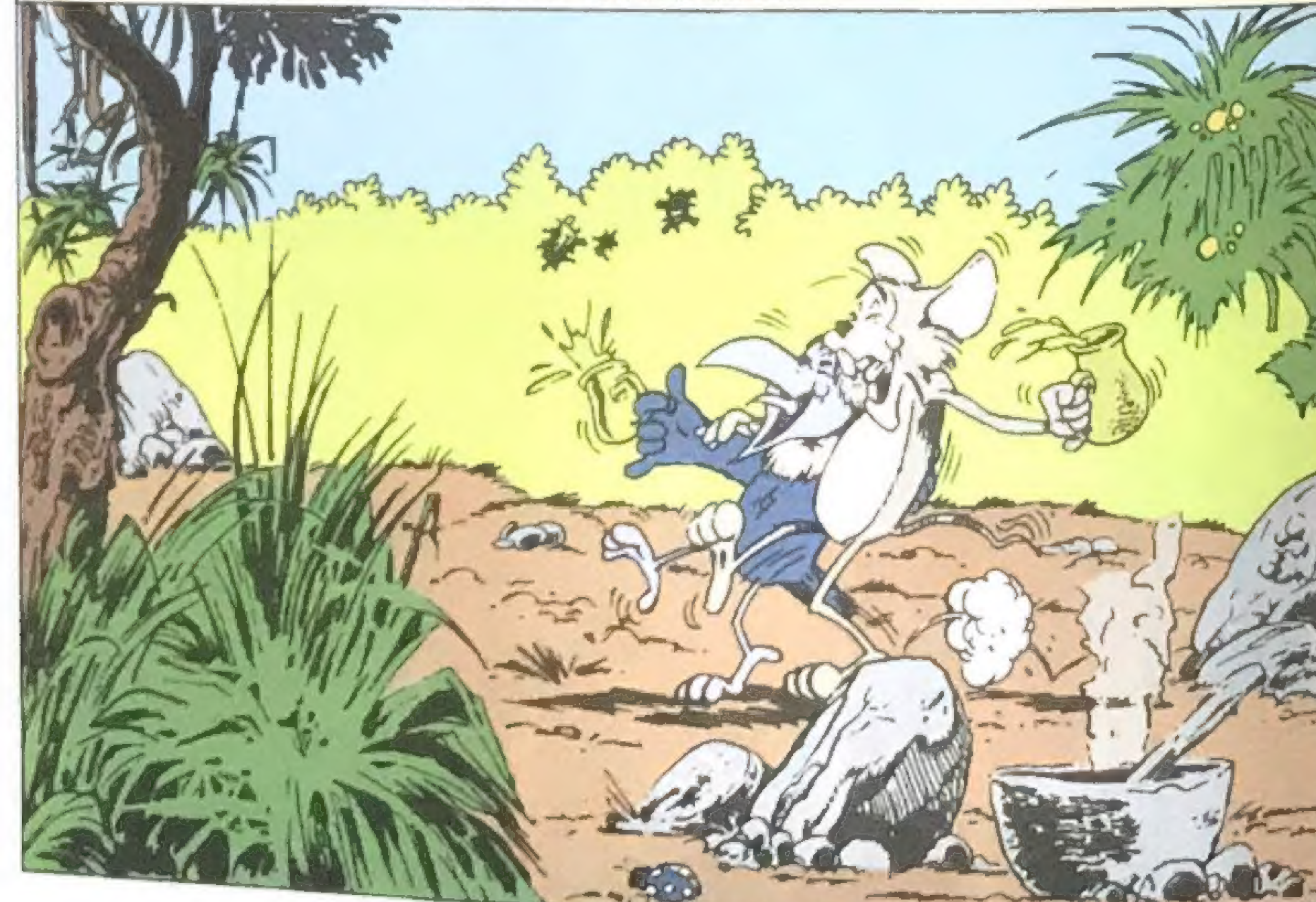
BUT AT THE END OF IT -

YOU NEED HAVE NO FEAR OF THAT. YOU ARE TOO TINY TO BE EVEN A FULL BREAKFAST FOR ME.

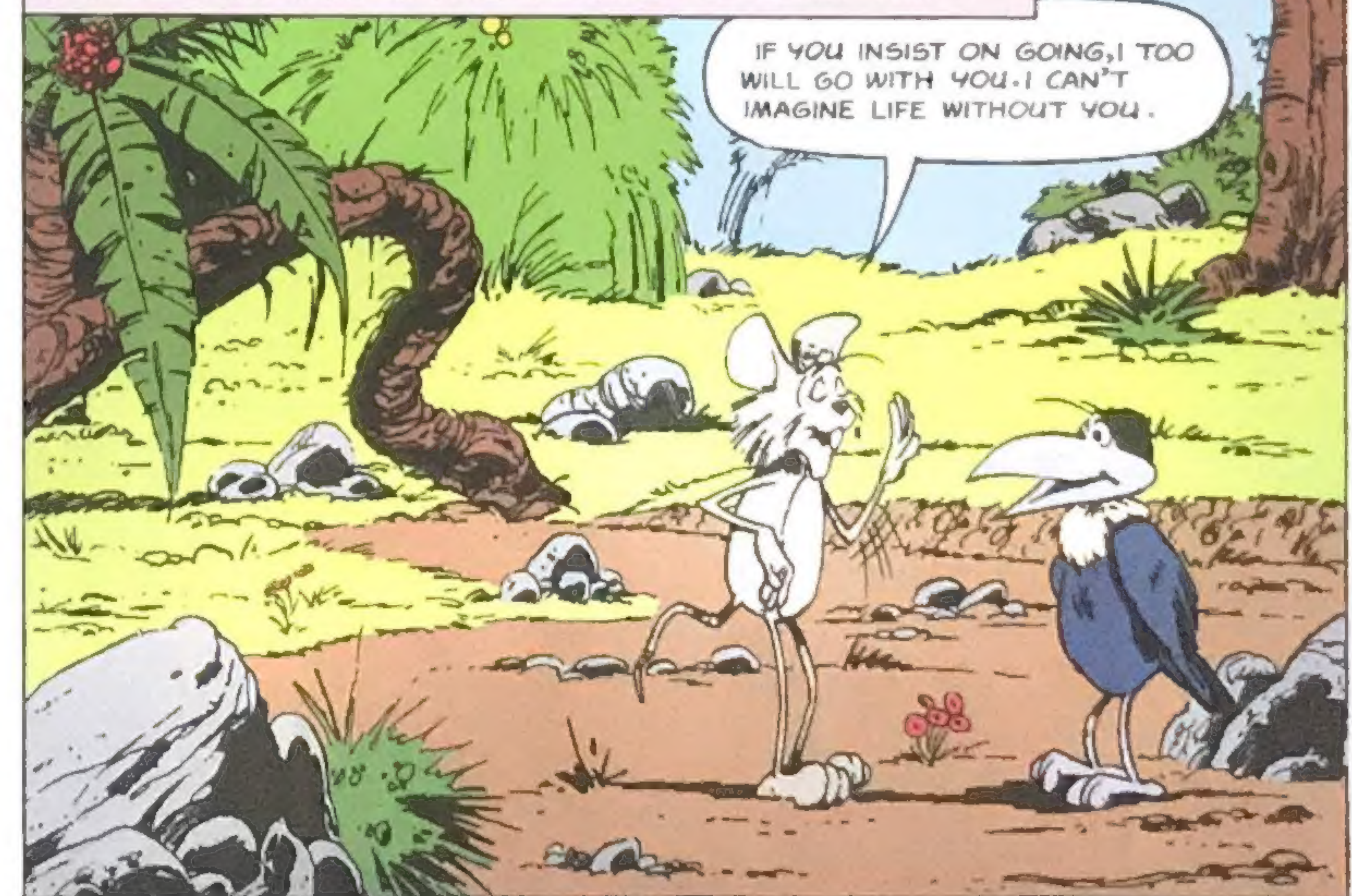




AND FROM THAT DAY THE TWO BECAME THE BEST OF FRIENDS, GIVING EACH OTHER THEIR CHOICE PICKINGS OF FOOD AND ANIMAL GOSSIP.



THE MOUSE HAD COME TO LOVE THE CROW SO DEARLY THAT -



SO THE TWO FRIENDS SET OFF FOR THE FOREST WHERE THE TORTOISE LIVED.



WHEN THE TORTOISE SAW THE CROW, HE WAS OVERJOYED.

WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE, MY GOOD OLD FRIEND?

FOOD WAS SCARCE IN OUR FOREST.



AND WHOM HAVE YOU BROUGHT ALONG?

MY LOYAL FRIEND, THE KING OF THE MICE. HE IS THE MOST VIRTUOUS AND KIND SOUL I'VE EVER MET.



WELCOME TO OUR FOREST, O MOUSE. THERE IS ENOUGH FOOD HERE FOR ALL OF US, AND MORE.

AND SO THE THREE FRIENDS LIVED HAPPILY TOGETHER. ONE DAY, AS THE TORTOISE WAS ABOUT TO GO FOR A SWIM IN THE TANK, A DEER CAME PANTING UP TO THEM.



WHAT'S THE MATTER?

A HUNTER. HE'S AFTER ME.

COME FRIEND, REFRESH YOURSELF WITH SOME GRASS AND WATER. MY FRIENDS WILL LOOK AFTER YOU. I AM GOING FOR A SWIM AND SHALL JOIN YOU LATER.

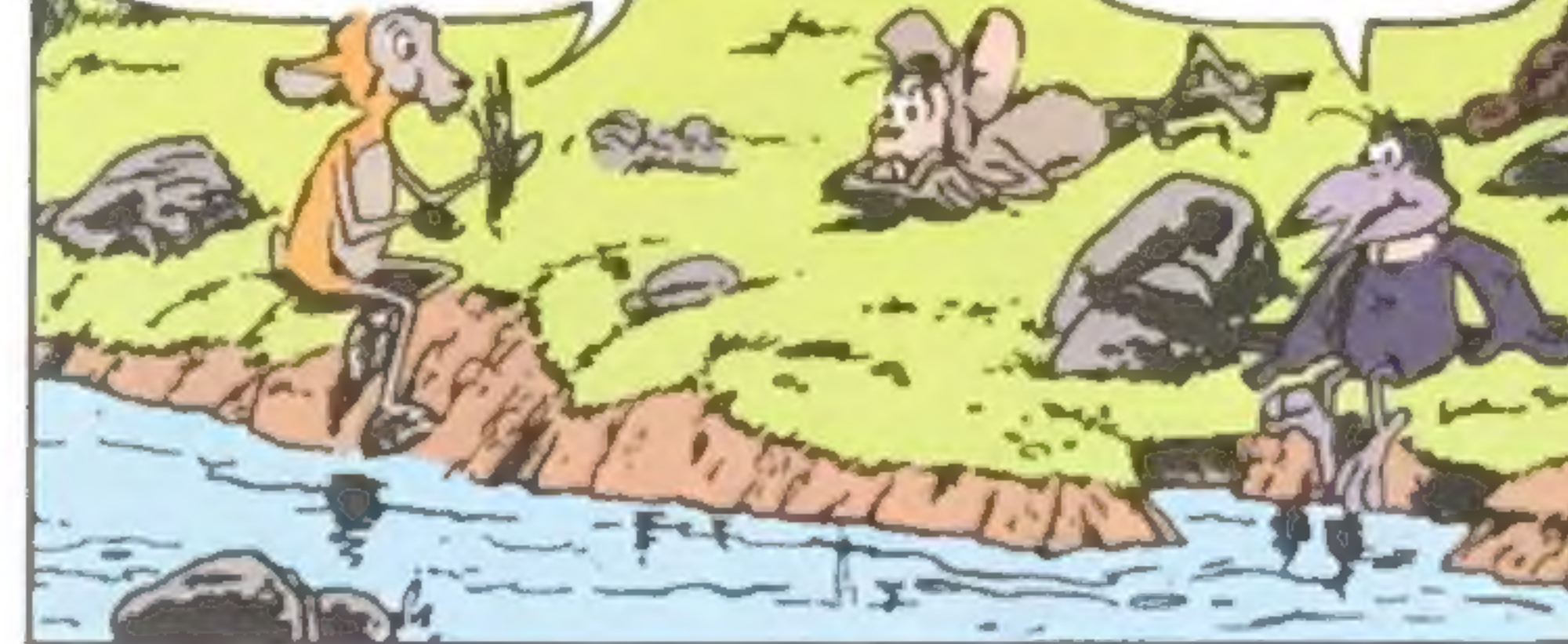


THE DEER HAD HIS REPAST AS THEY WAITED FOR THE TORTOISE.

WE MUST FLEE FROM HERE. I TOOK A SHORT CUT. THE HUNTER WILL SOON DISCOVER THIS FOREST. IT'S ON HIS ROUTE.

THEN WE MUST LEAVE THIS FOREST.

YES, IT WOULD BE SAFER.



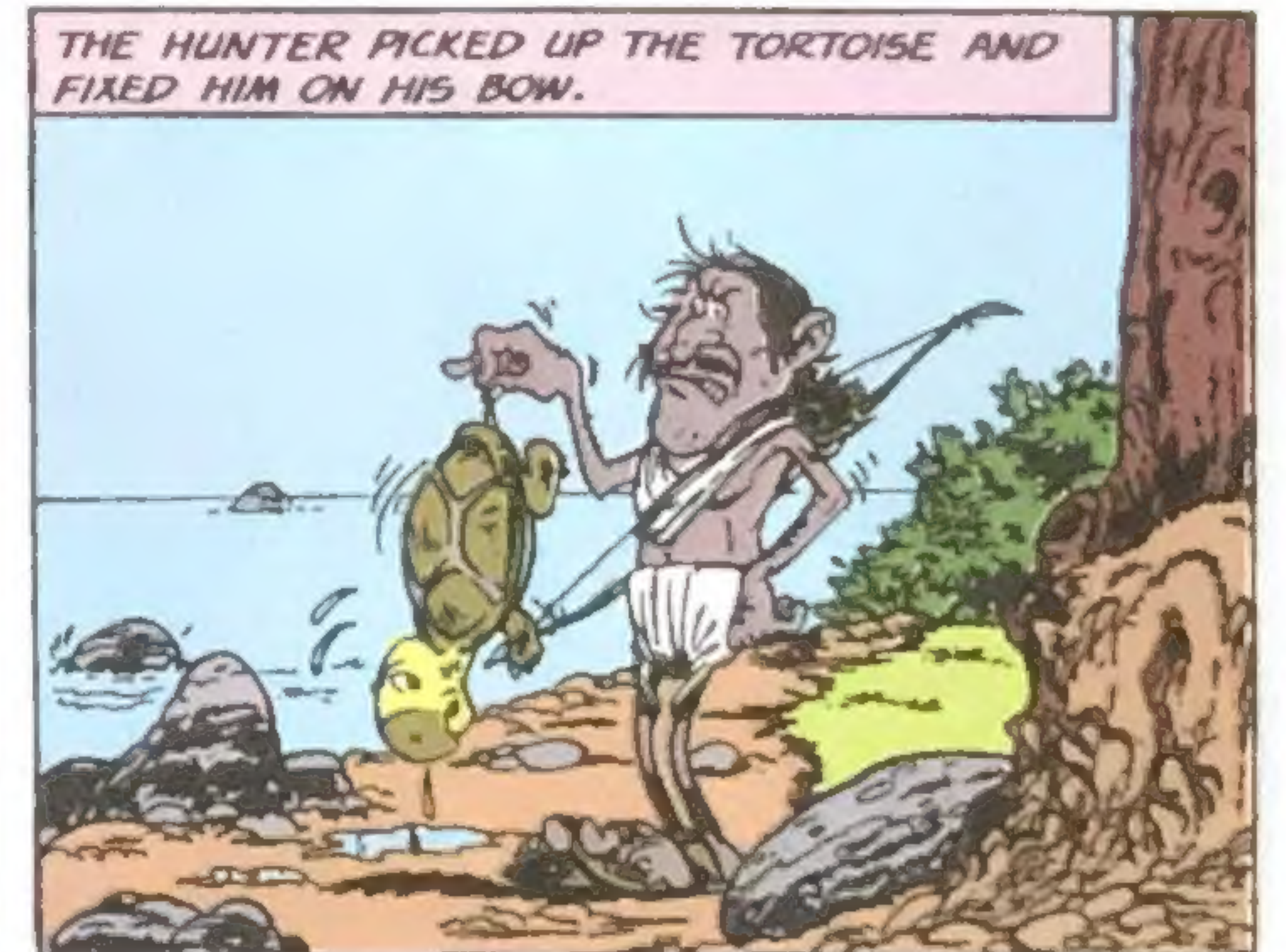
BUT HOW WILL GOOD OLD TORTOISE MAKE IT ACROSS THE LAND?



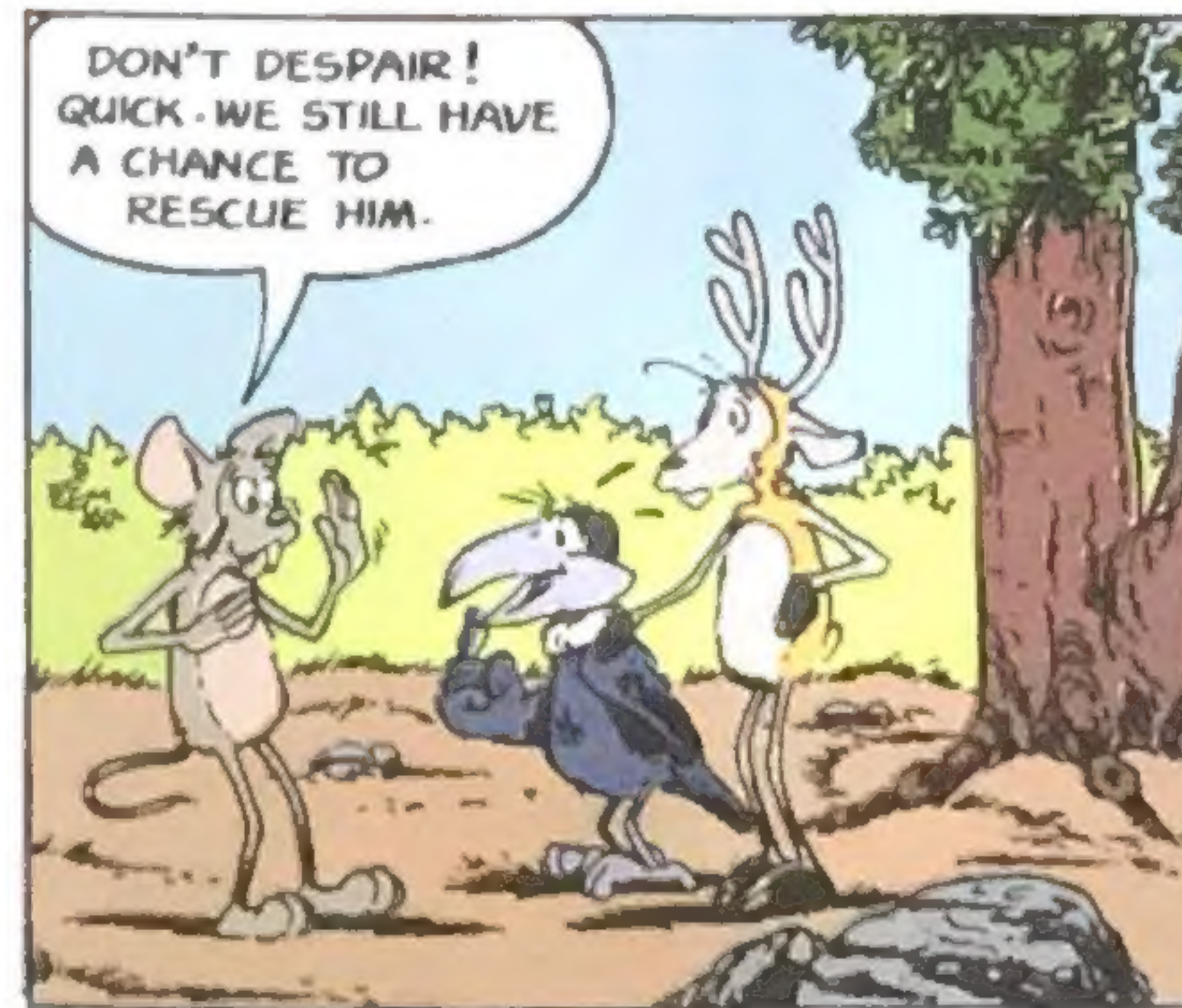
SUDDENLY-

HELP! HELP!

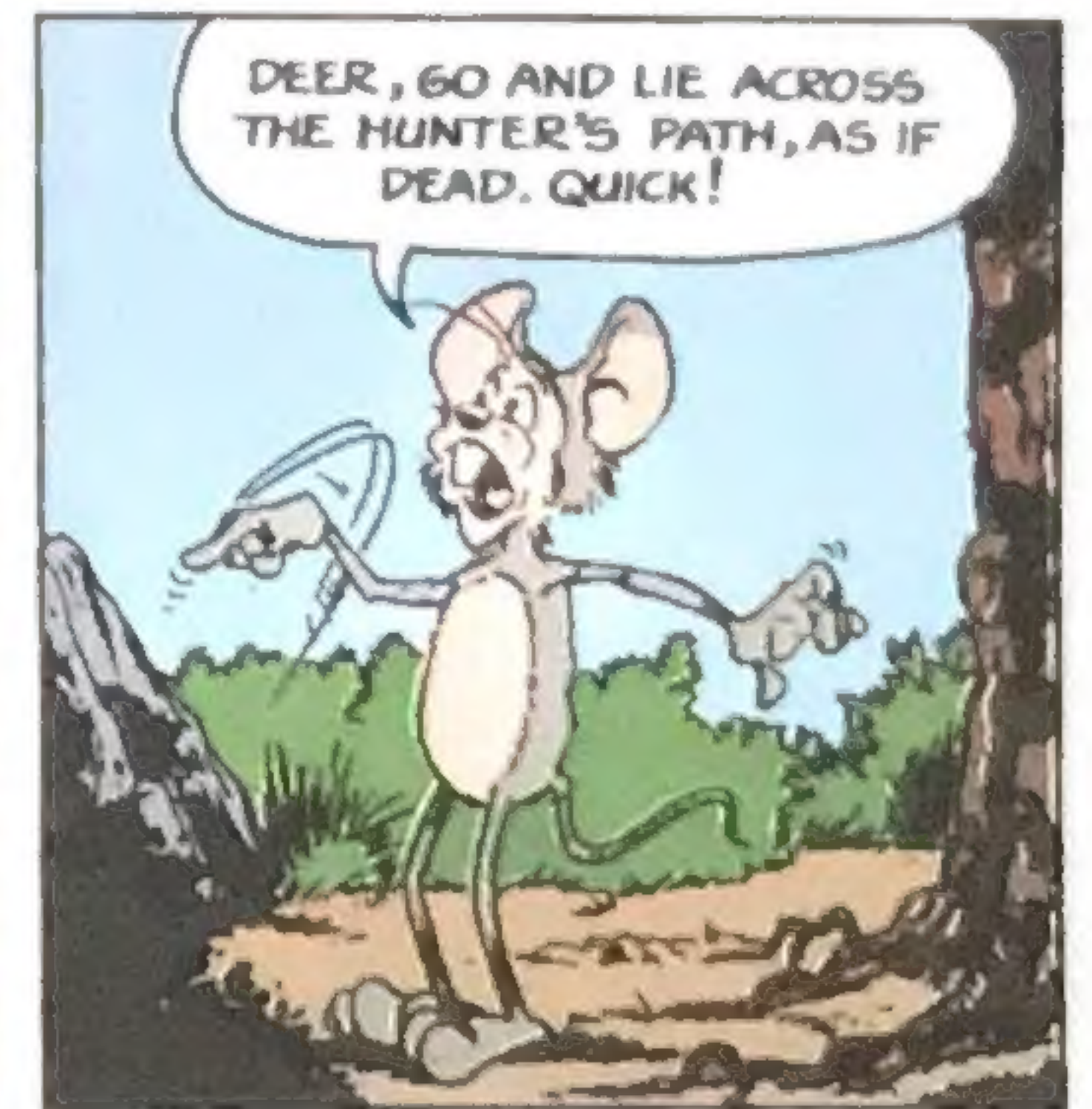
ALAS! OUR FRIEND HAS BEEN CAUGHT!



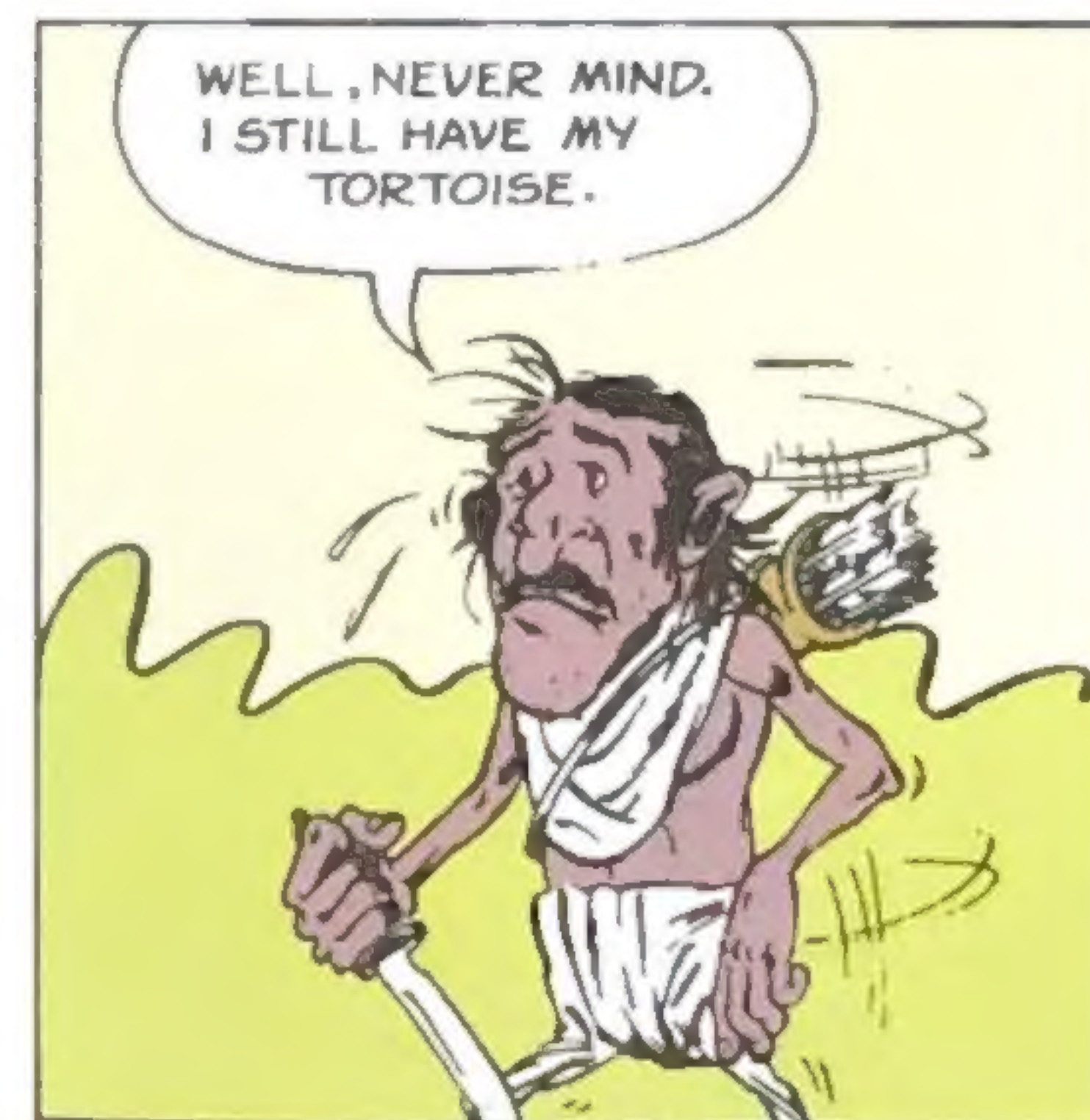
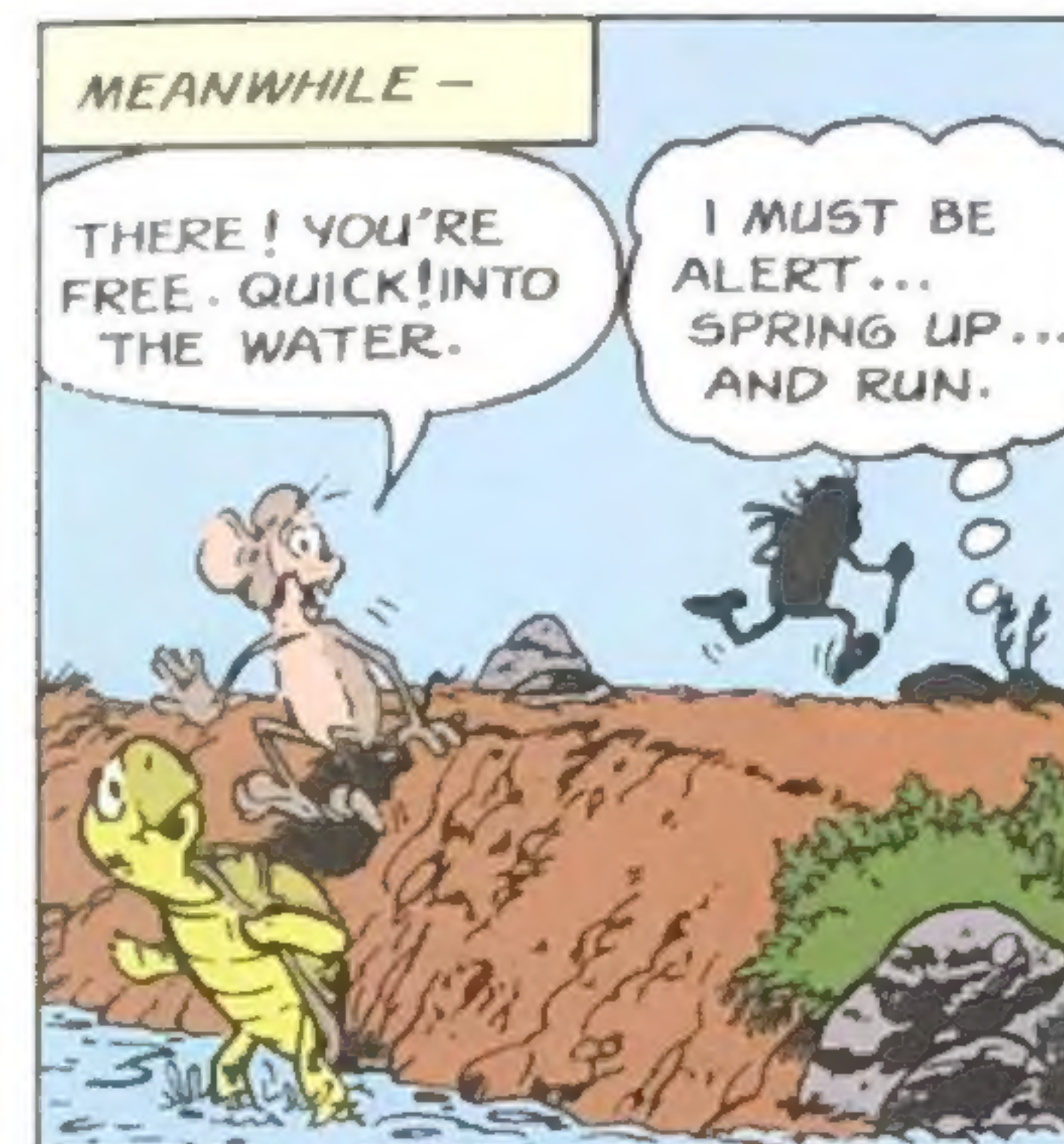
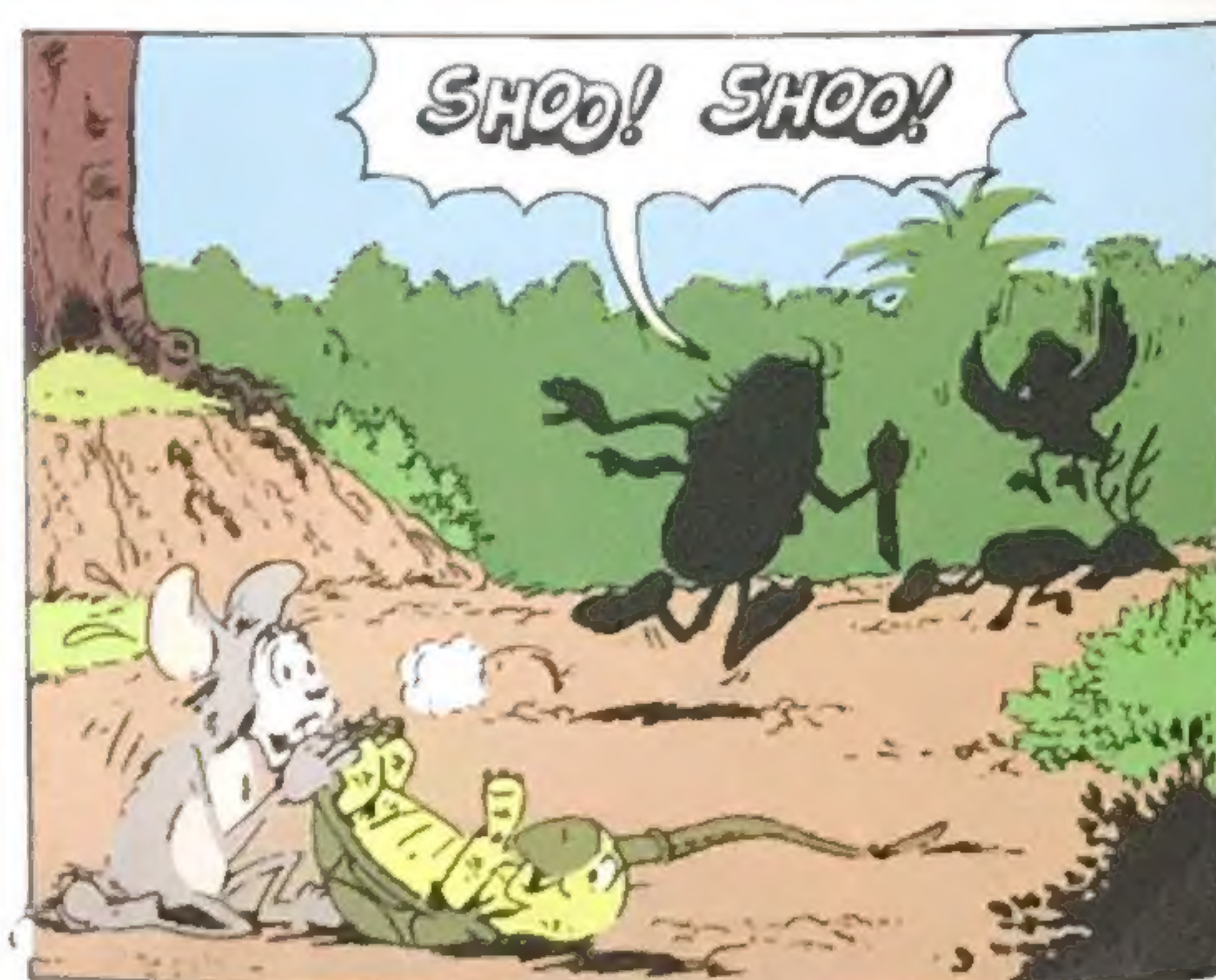
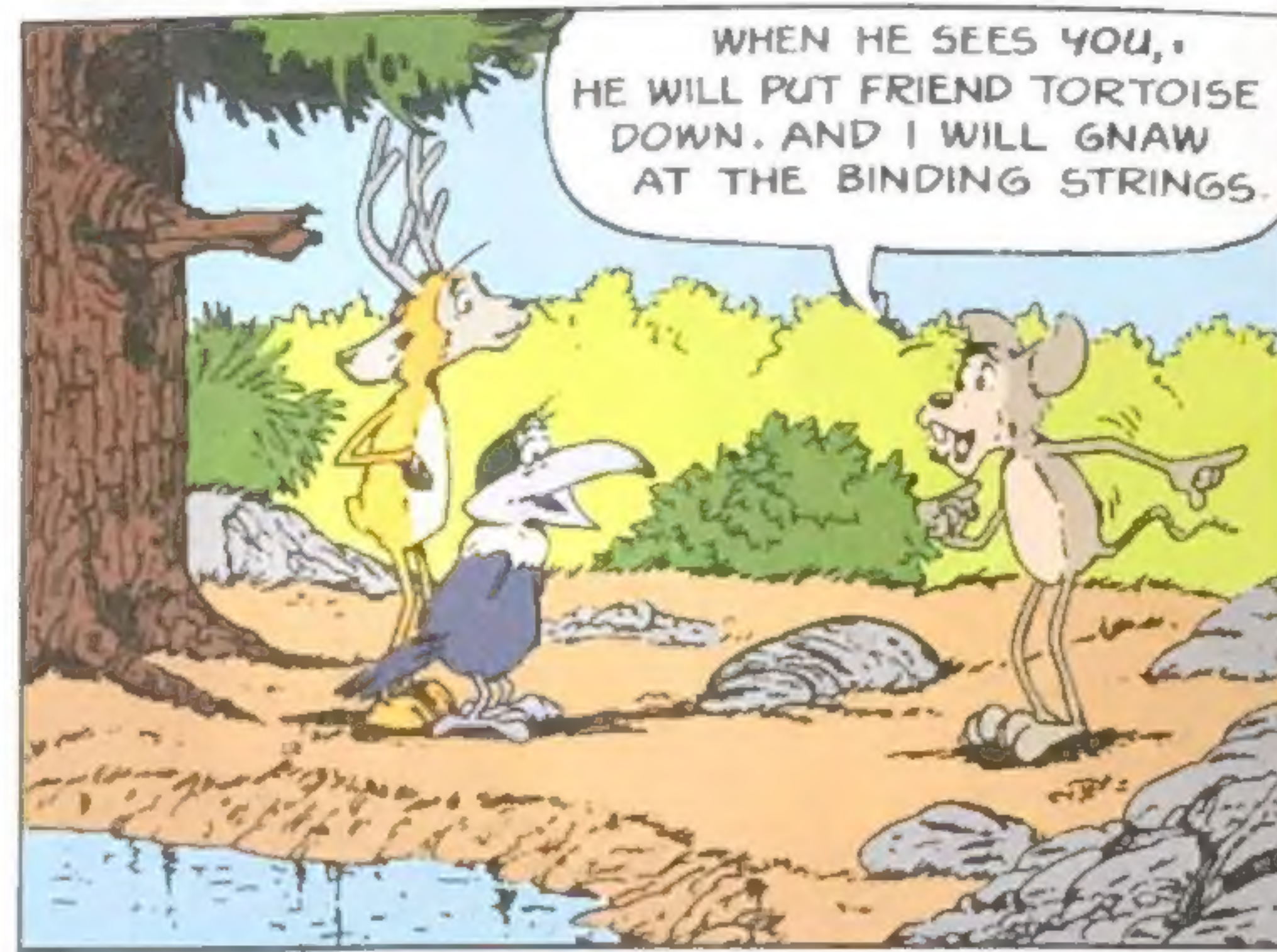
THE HUNTER PICKED UP THE TORTOISE AND FIXED HIM ON HIS BOW.



DON'T DESPAIR! QUICK. WE STILL HAVE A CHANCE TO RESCUE HIM.



DEER, GO AND LIE ACROSS THE HUNTER'S PATH, AS IF DEAD. QUICK!



THE TIGER AND THE TRAVELLER

ONE DAY A TIGER, TOO OLD TO HUNT, WAS WALKING BY A MARSHY POOL WHEN HE SAW A GOLD BANGLE.

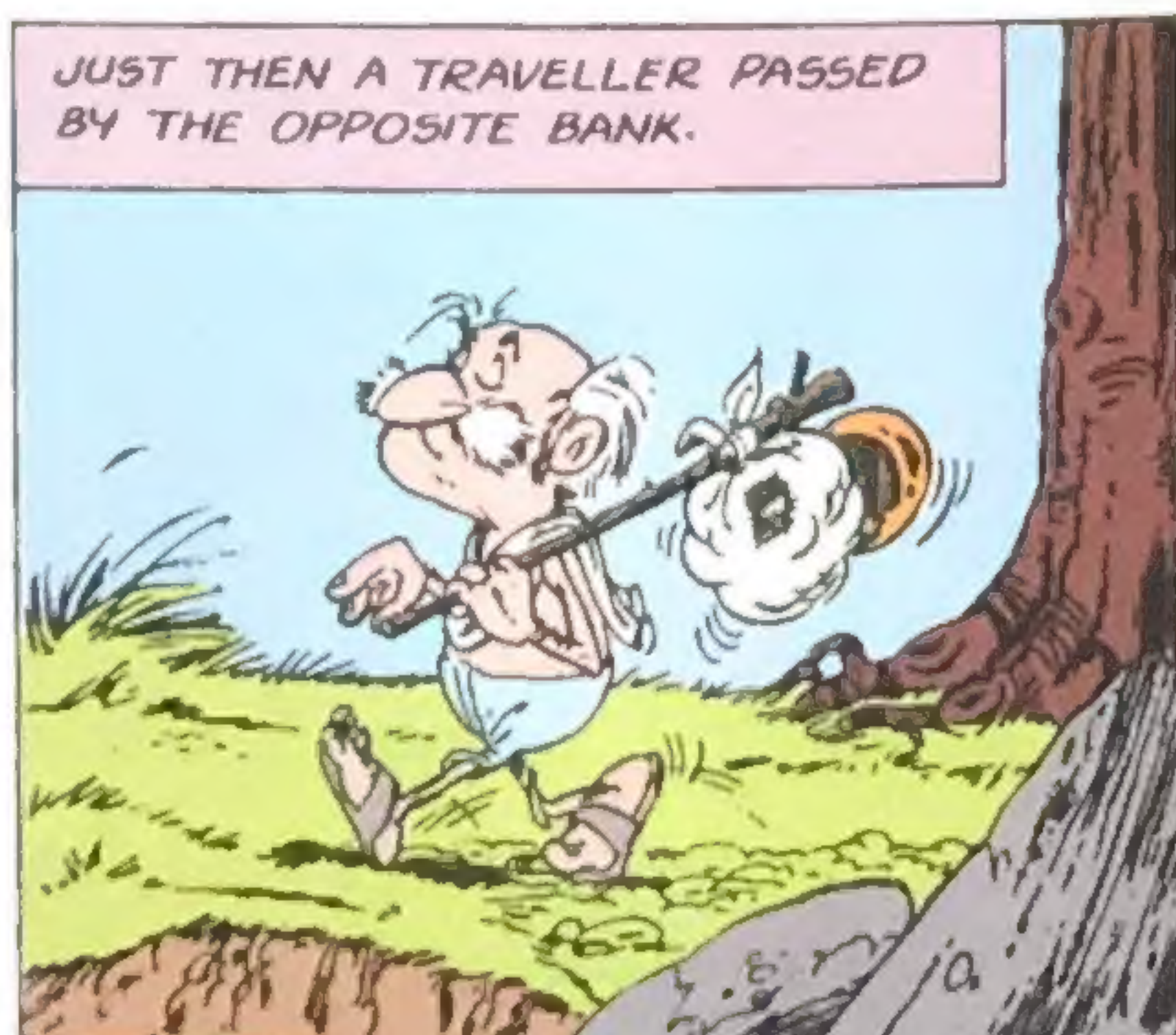
I MAY AS WELL PICK IT UP. IT COULD BE OF SOME USE.



I'VE GOT THE BAIT. NOW I MUST WAIT FOR THE CATCH.

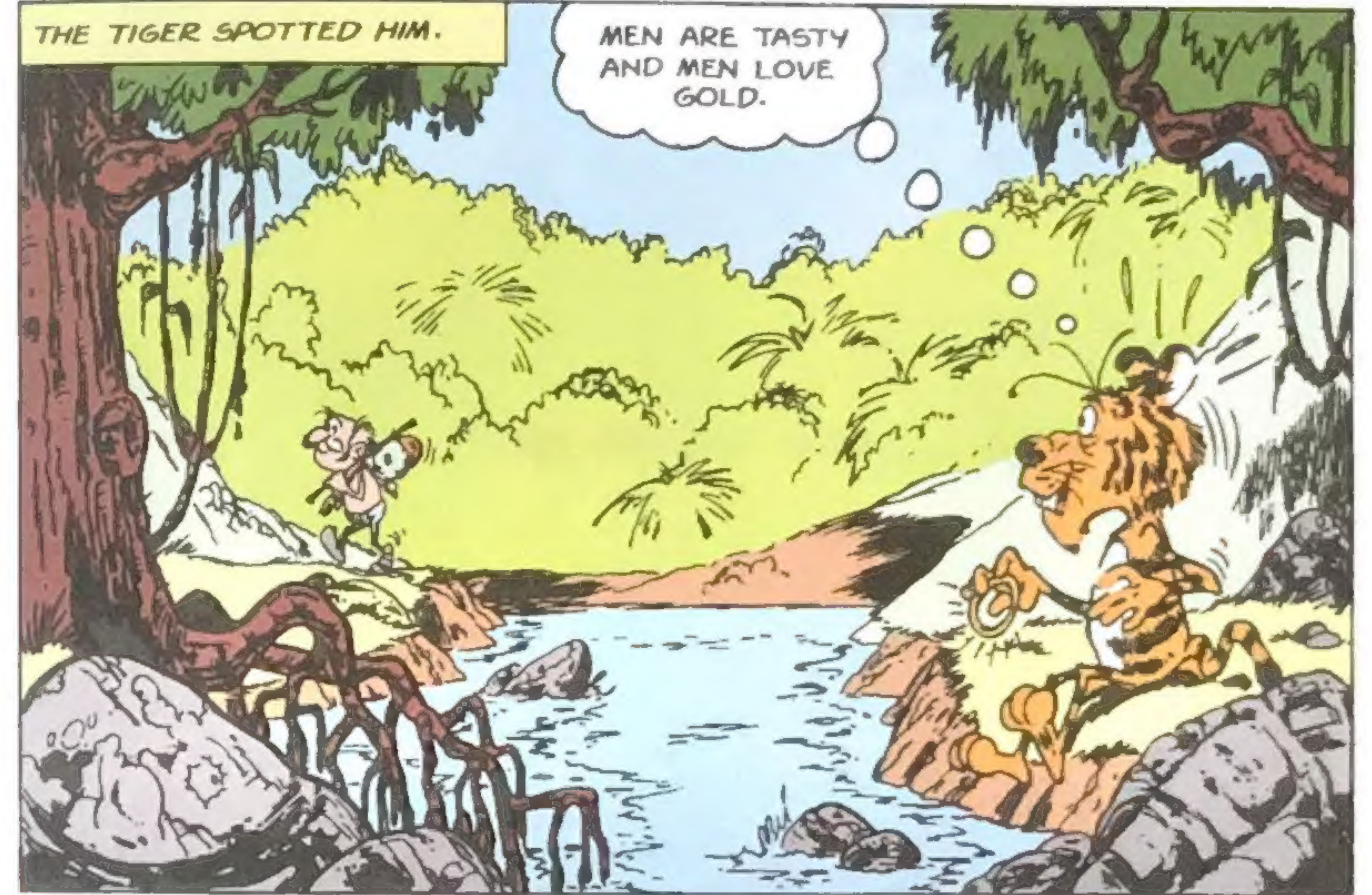


JUST THEN A TRAVELLER PASSED BY THE OPPOSITE BANK.

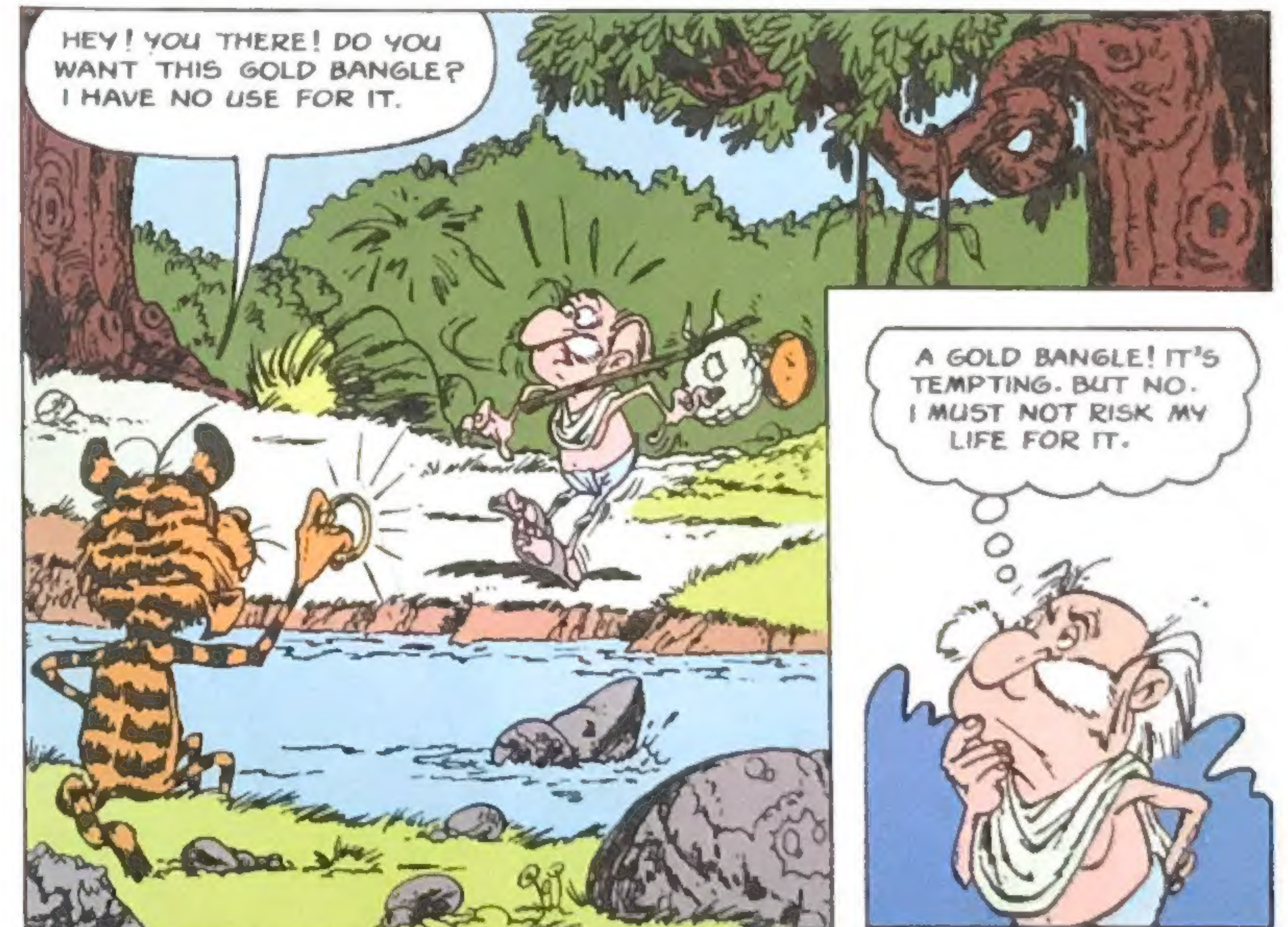


THE TIGER SPOTTED HIM.

MEN ARE TASTY AND MEN LOVE GOLD.

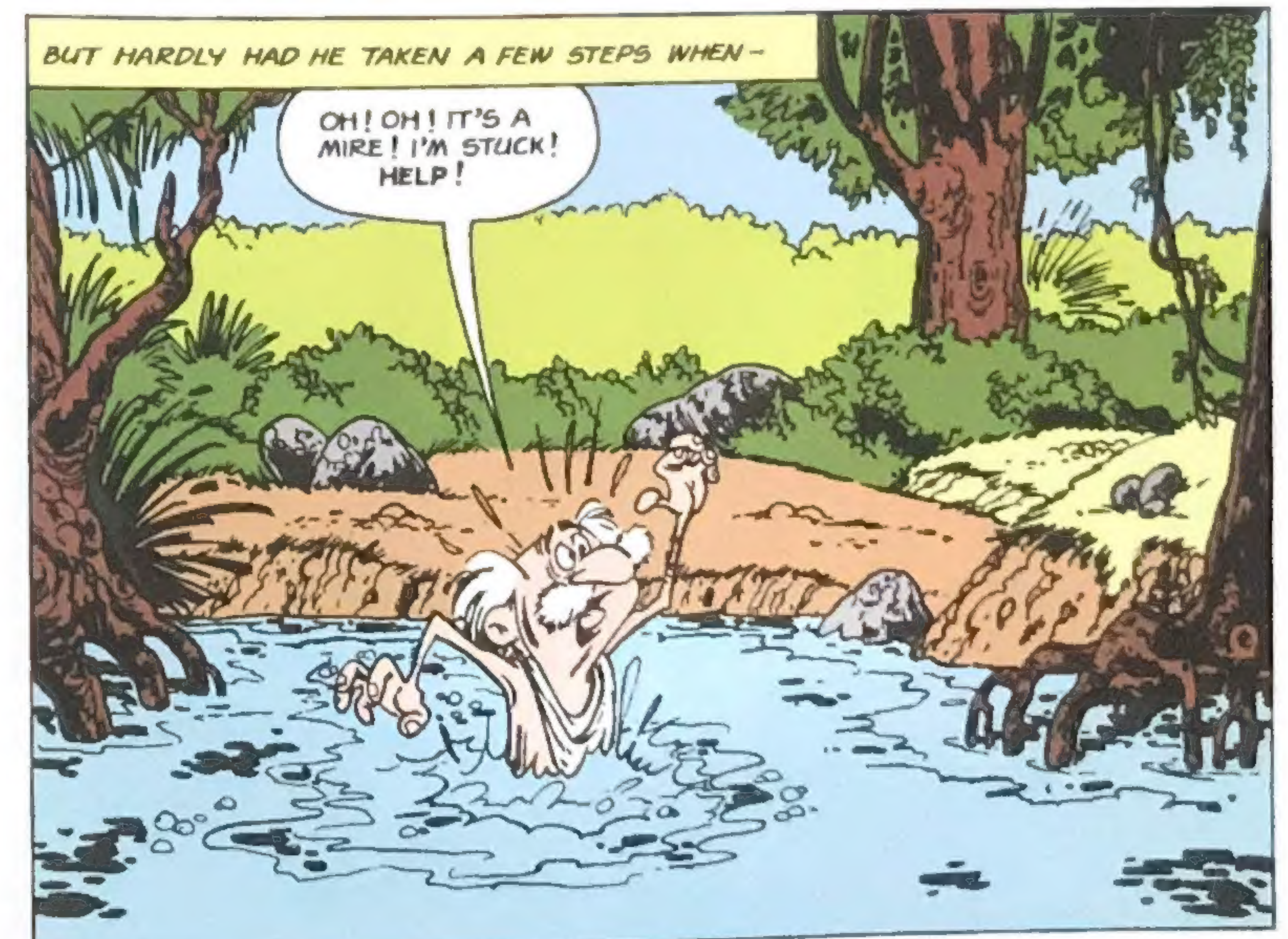
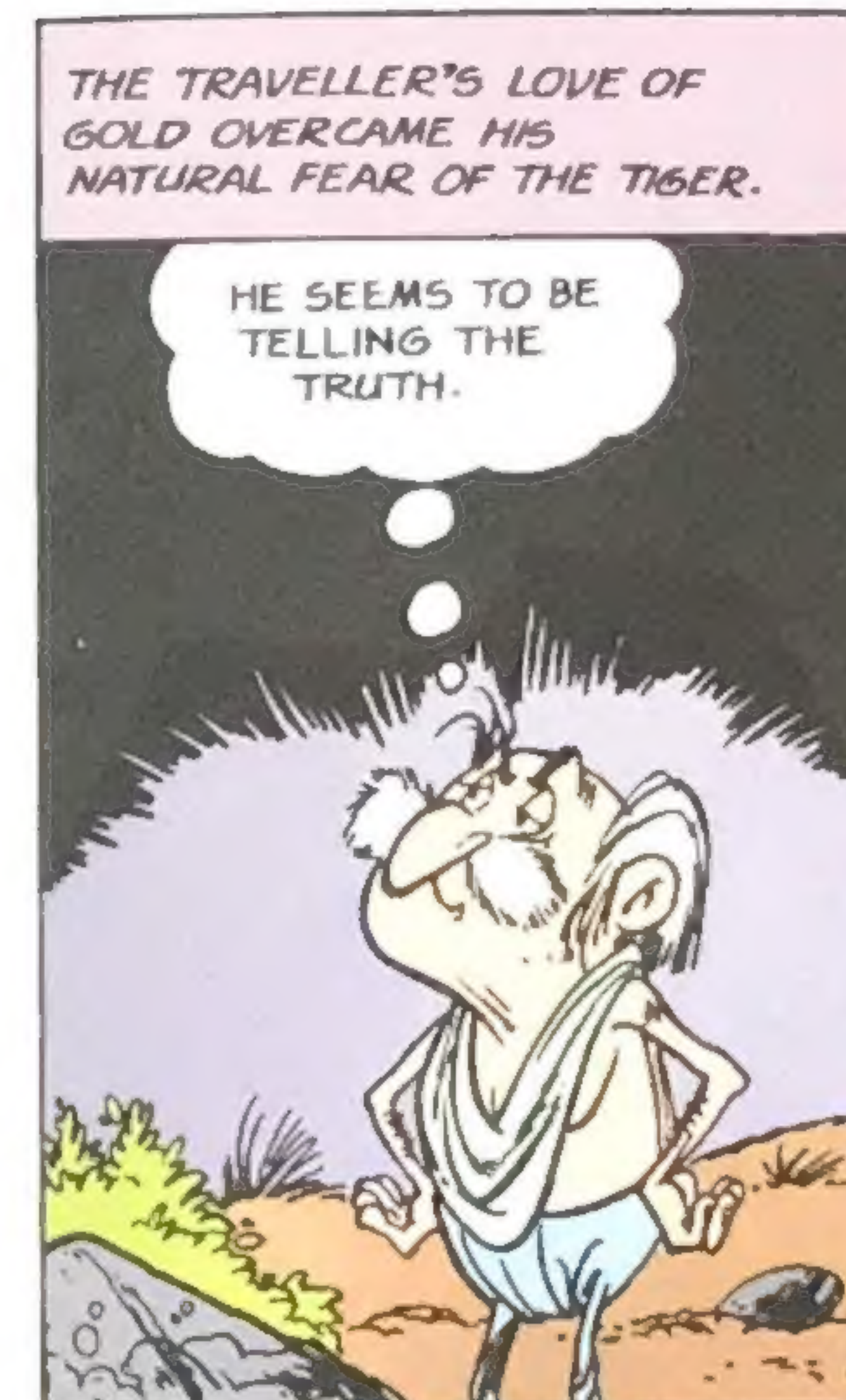


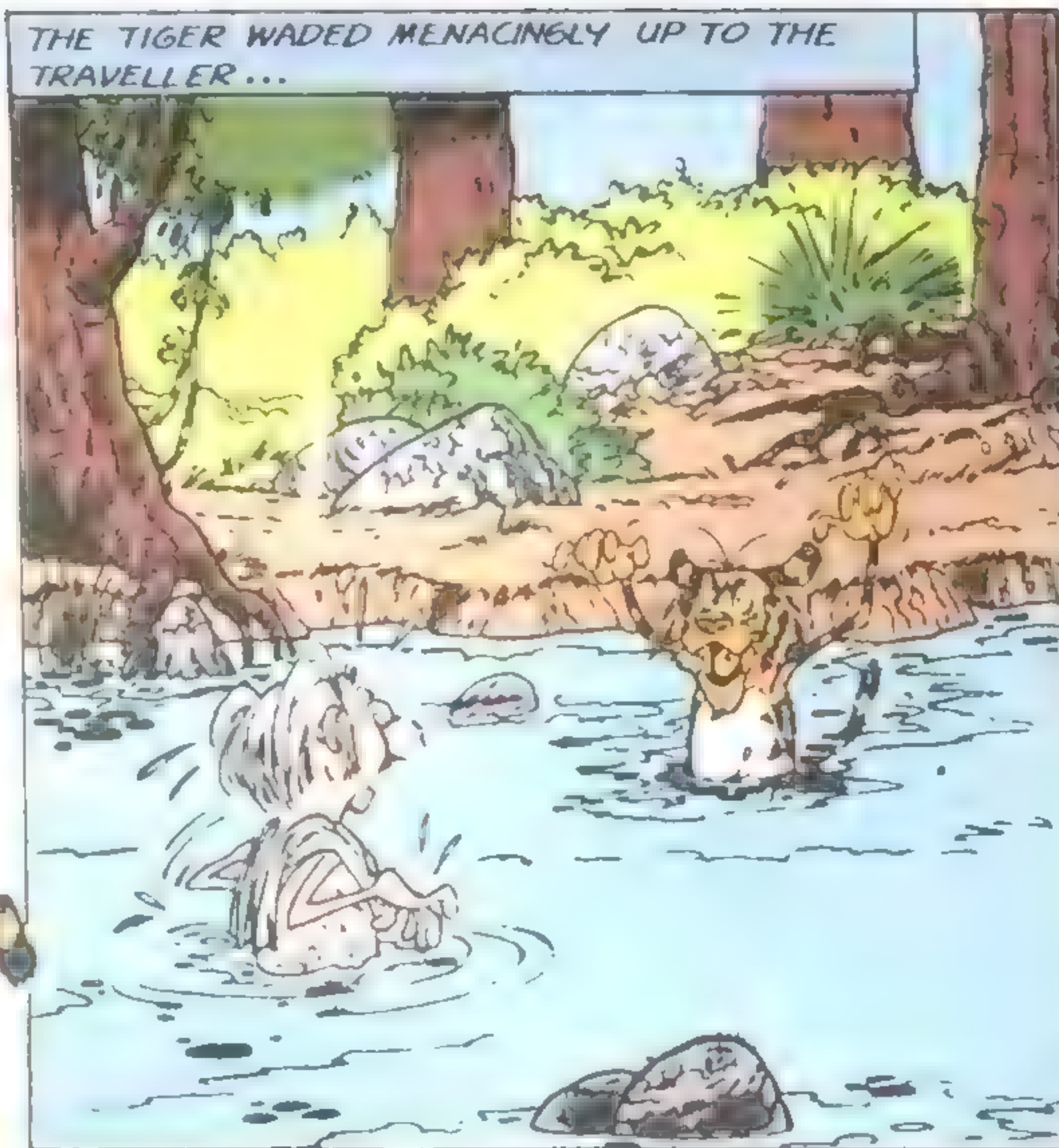
HEY! YOU THERE! DO YOU WANT THIS GOLD BANGLE? I HAVE NO USE FOR IT.



A GOLD BANGLE! IT'S TEMPTING. BUT NO. I MUST NOT RISK MY LIFE FOR IT.

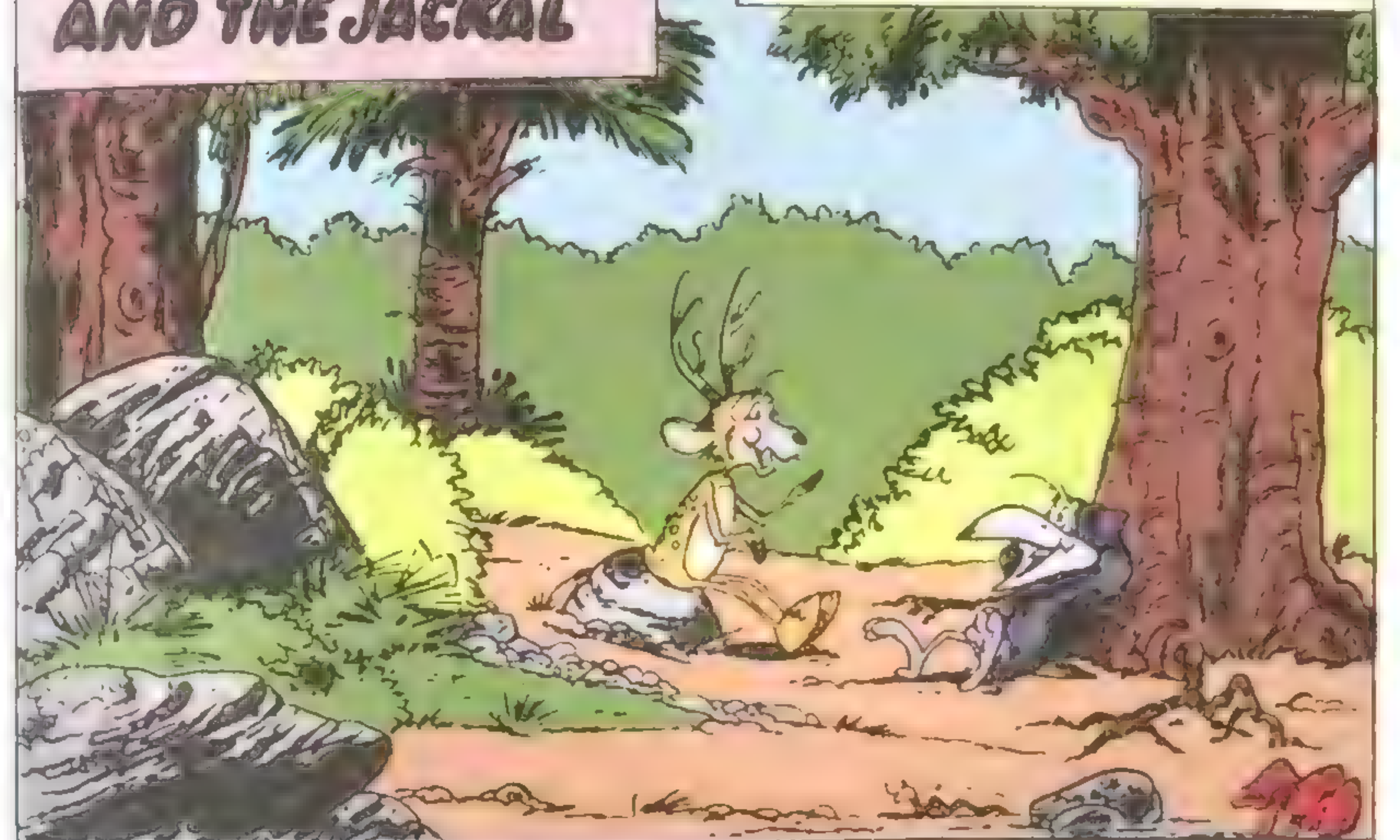






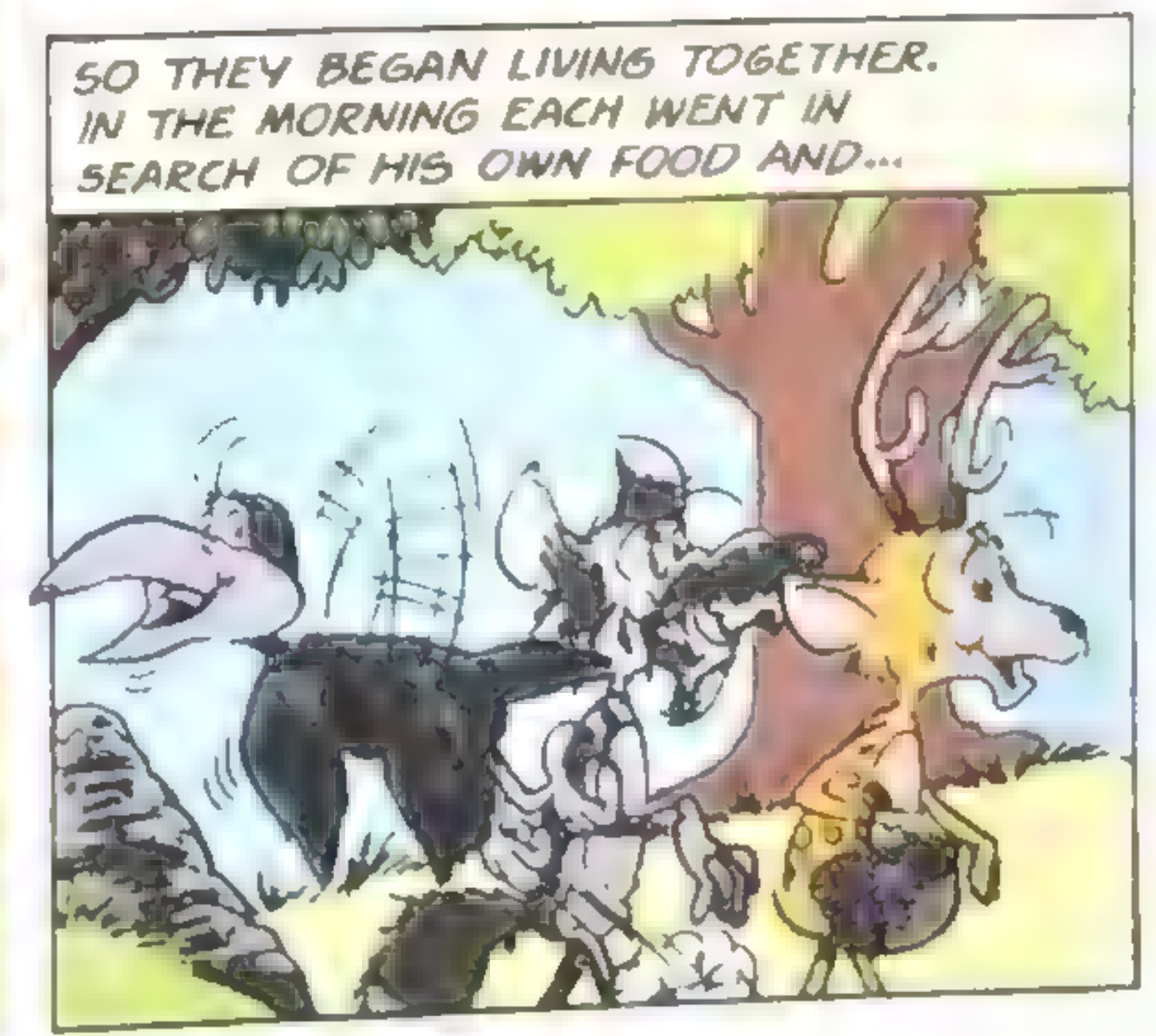
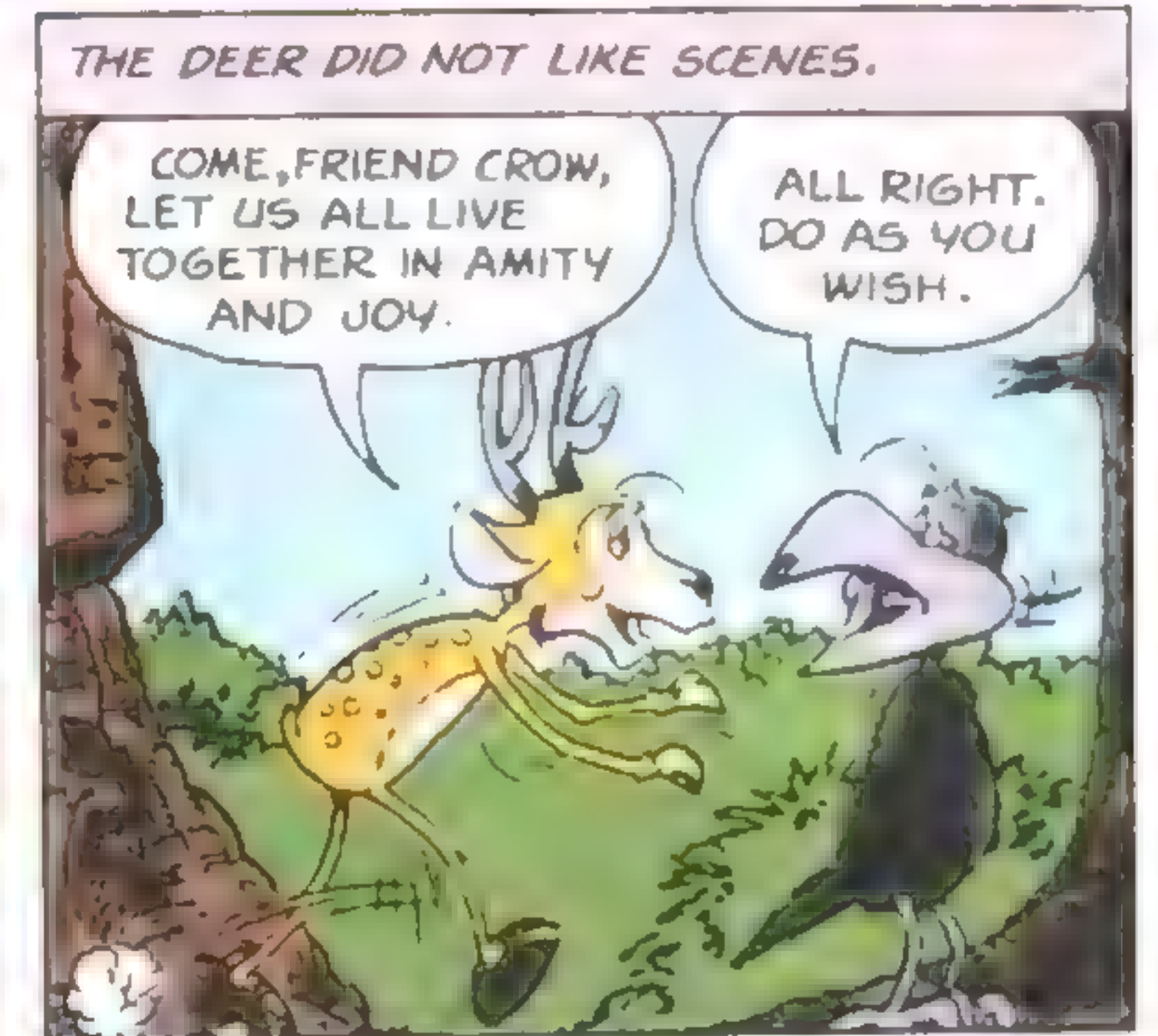
THE CROW, THE DEER AND THE JACKAL

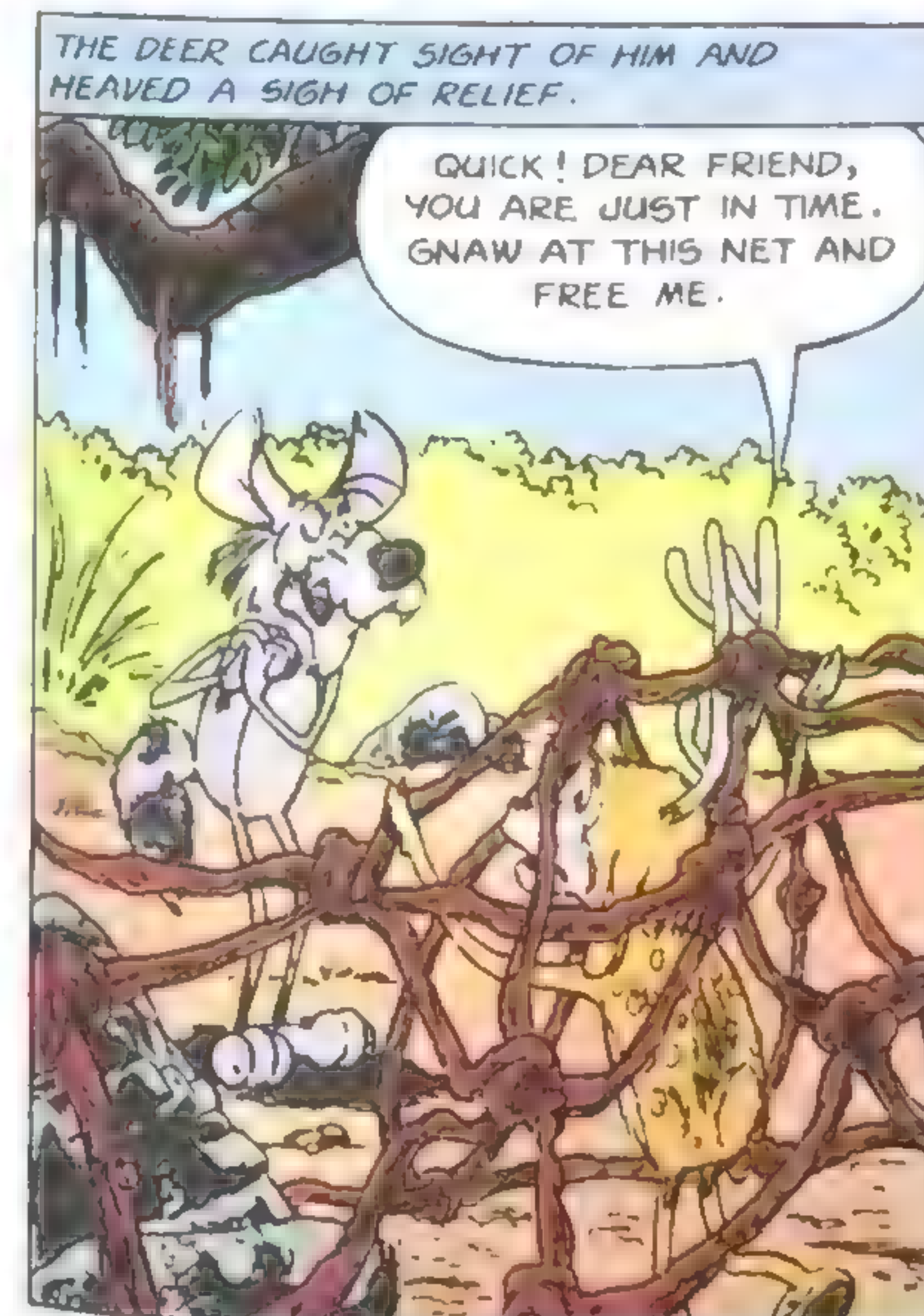
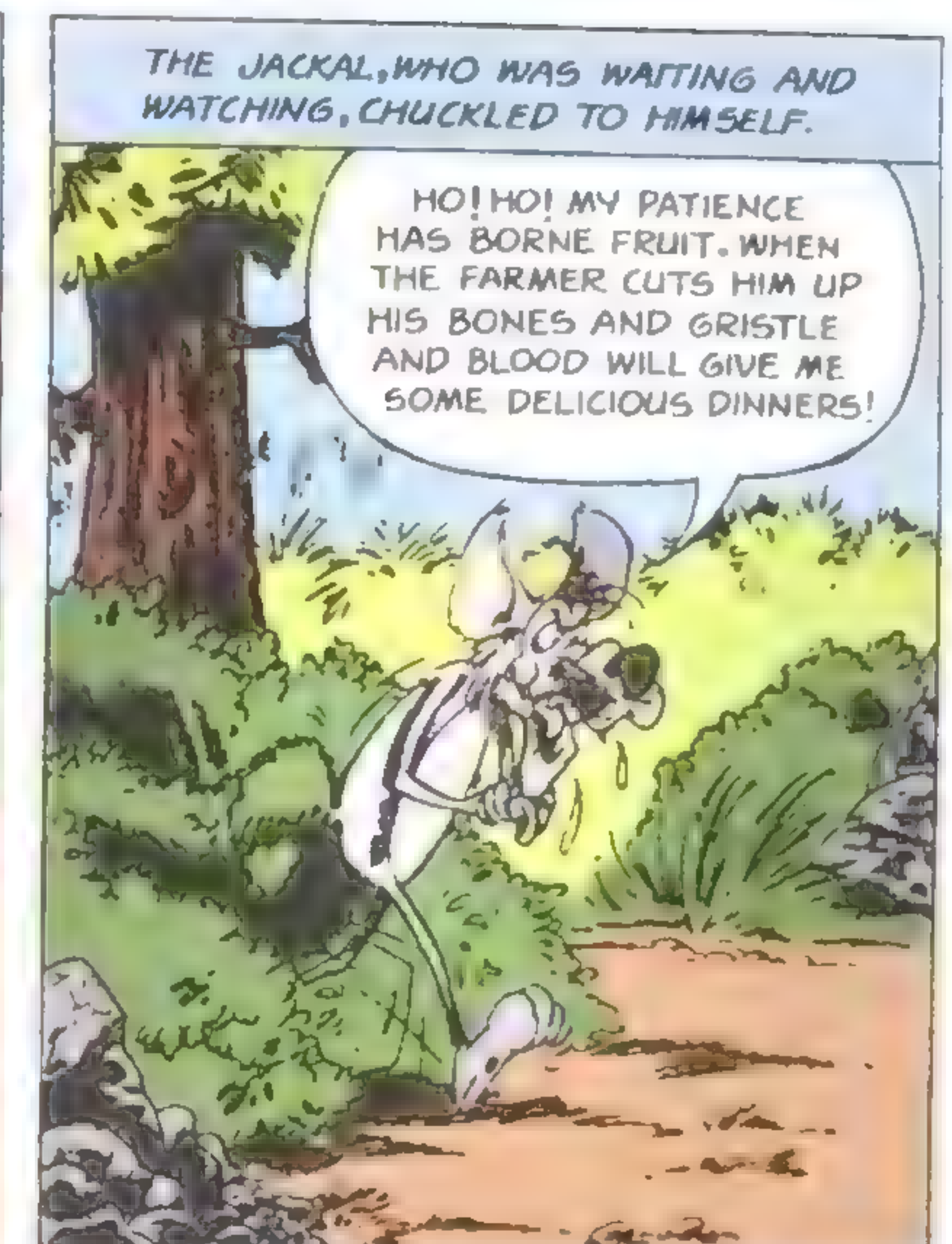
LONG, LONG AGO THERE LIVED A DEER AND A CROW. THEY WERE GOOD FRIENDS AND LOVED EACH OTHER DEARLY.





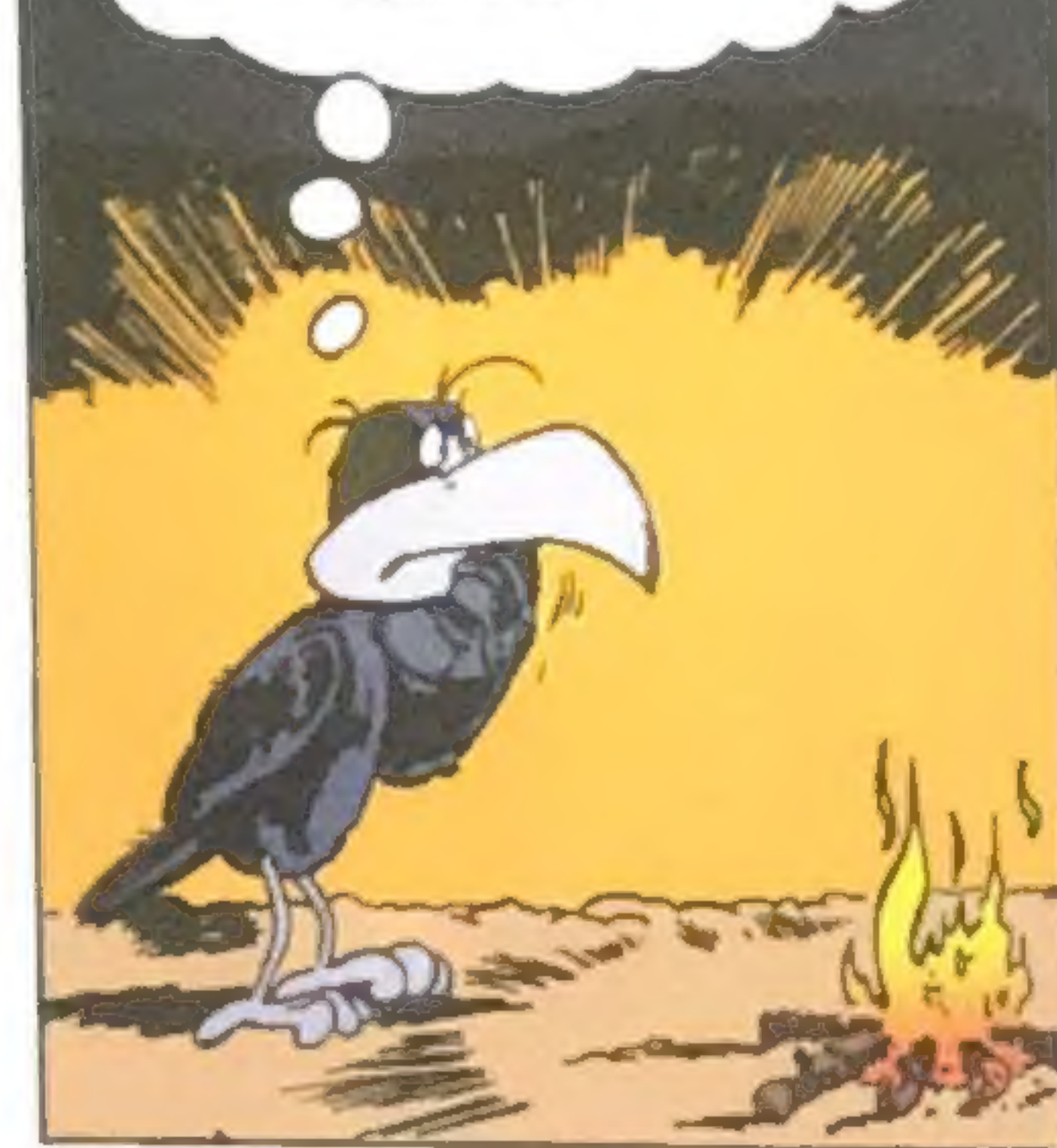
WHEN THE CROW SAW THE TWO TOGETHER, HE WAS SURPRISED.





WHEN THE CROW RETURNED HOME THAT EVENING AND DID NOT SEE HIS FRIEND, HE WAS WORRIED.

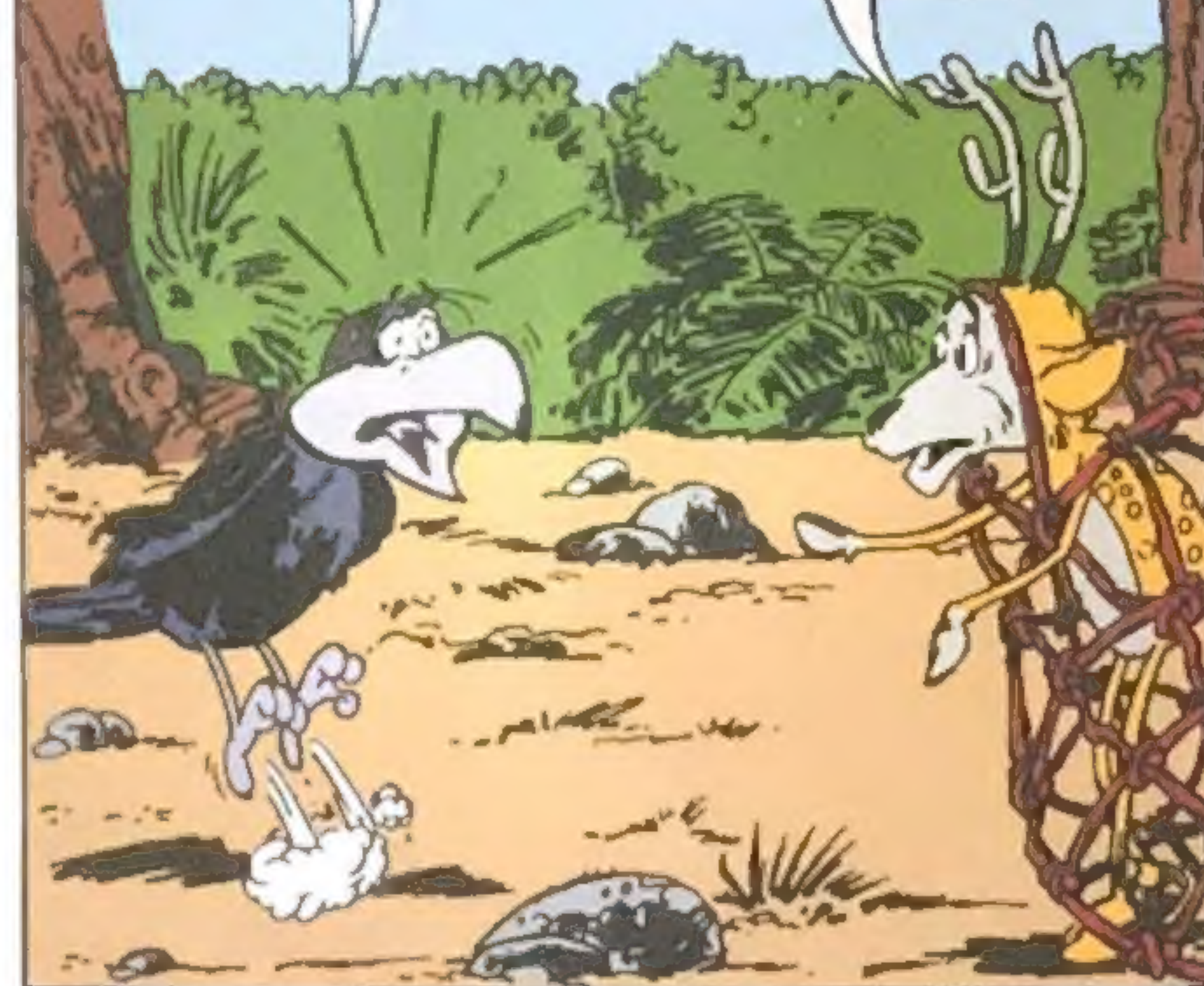
WHERE COULD HE BE? I HOPE HE IS NOT IN DANGER. I STILL DON'T TRUST THAT JACKAL.



AFTER SEARCHING EVERYWHERE FOR HIS FRIEND, HE CAME UPON THE FIELD.

ALAS! MY POOR DEAR FRIEND-HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

THE JACKAL... I SHOULD HAVE TAKEN YOUR ADVICE.



AH! THE TRAITOR! THE SLY KNAVE! WELL, I WARNED YOU.

I KNOW!



NEVER MIND. WHERE IS THAT RASCAL?

HE IS WAITING SOMEWHERE NEAR BY. WAITING TO TASTE MY FLESH. FLY AWAY LEST YOU TOO FALL INTO DANGER.



NO! DEAR FRIEND, I SHALL WAIT WITH YOU TILL THE END. PERHAPS I MIGHT STILL SAVE YOU.



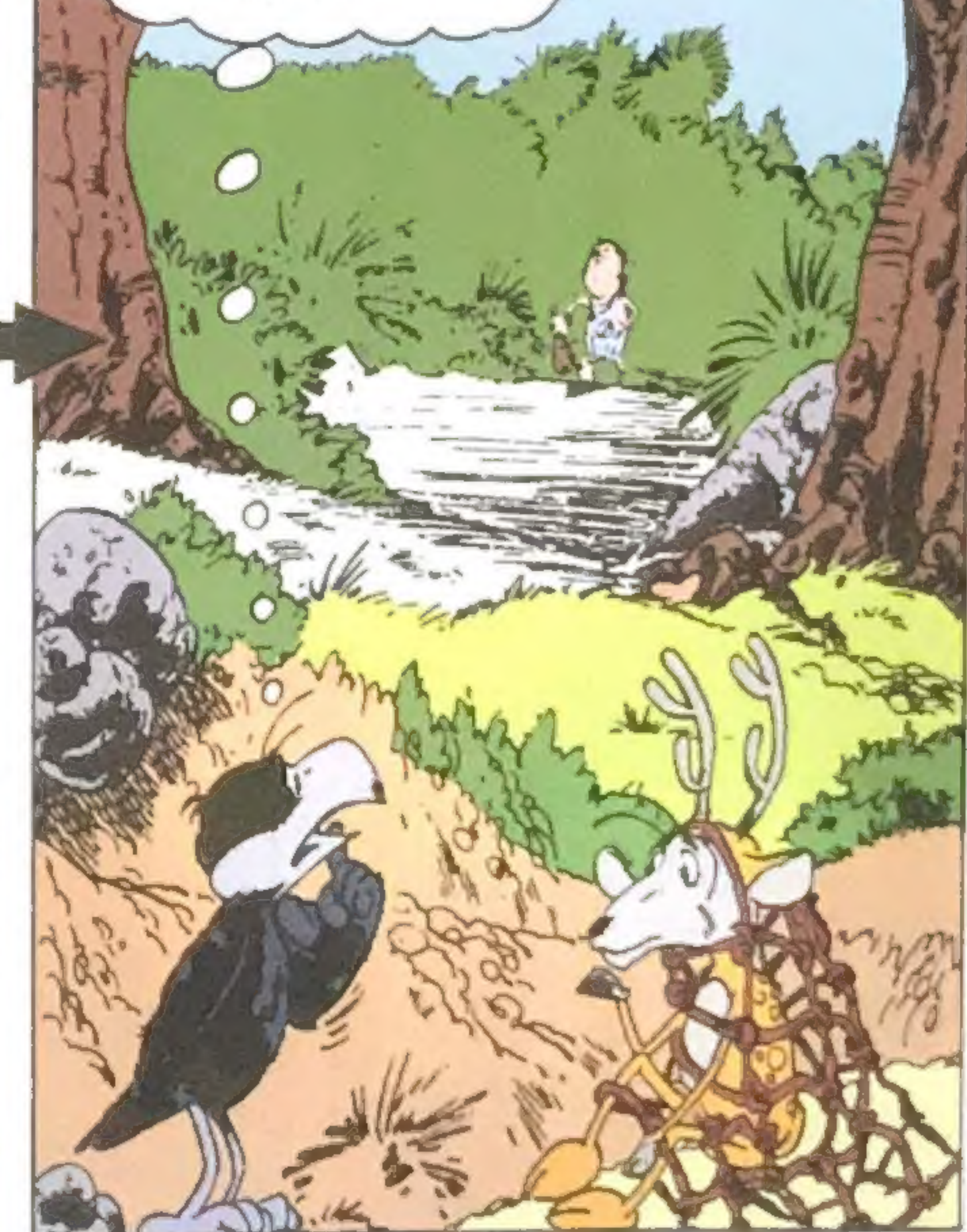
SUDDENLY AN IDEA STRUCK HIM.

I HAVE IT! LIE ON YOUR BACK, PUFF YOUR STOMACH OUT, STIFFEN YOUR LEGS AND BE VERY STILL. I WILL PECK AT YOUR EYES. THEN WHEN I CROAK, SPRING TO YOUR FEET AND RUN FOR YOUR LIFE.



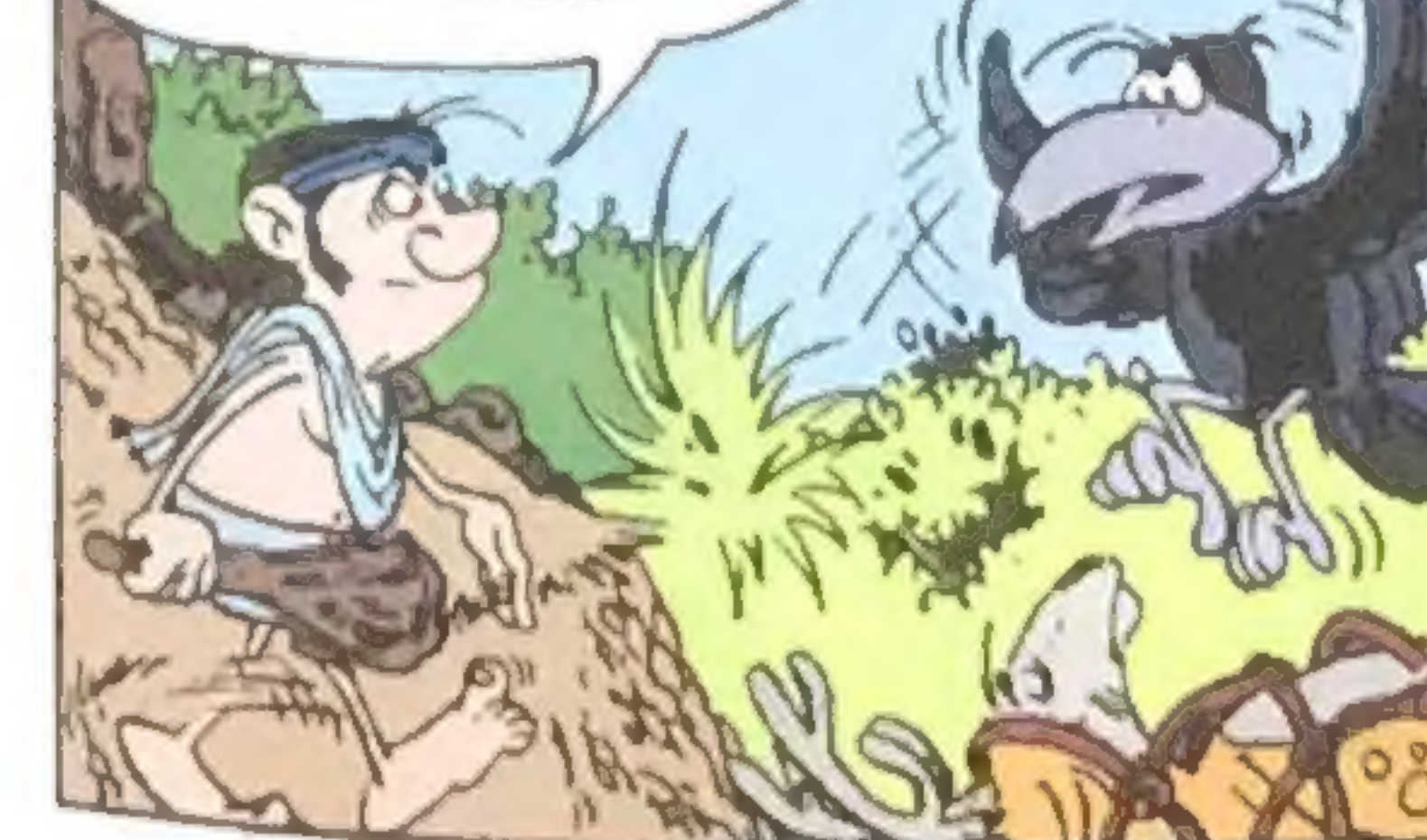
THE CROW RACKED HIS BRAINS BUT COULD FIND NO WAY OUT. AT LAST DAY BROKE.

ALAS! THERE COMES THE FARMER WITH HIS CLUB. IF ONLY I COULD THINK OF SOME MEANS TO SAVE MY FRIEND.



THE DEER DID EXACTLY AS HE WAS TOLD. WHEN THE FARMER CAME UP TO HIM -

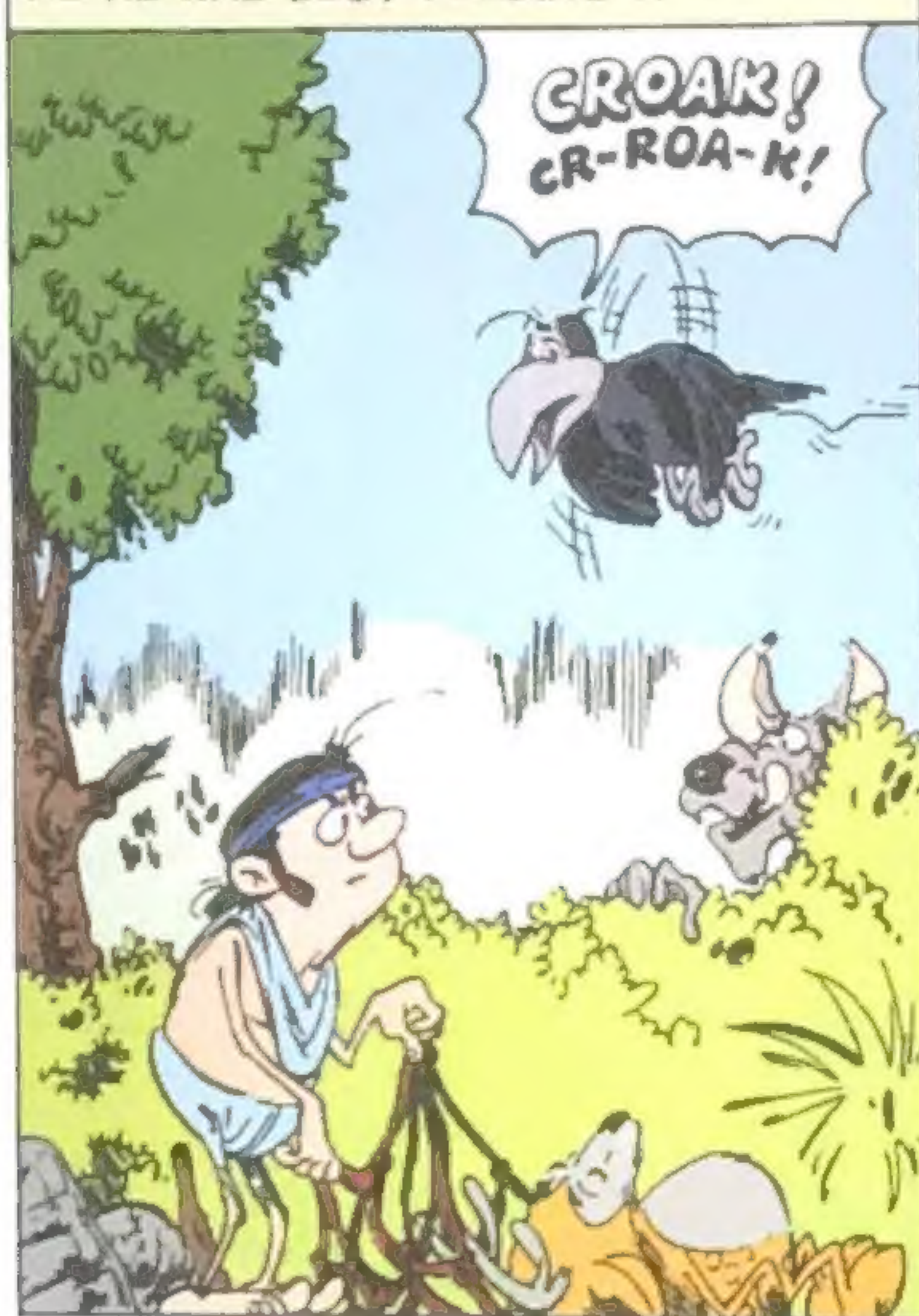
AHA! THE FELLOW IS DEAD - OF FRIGHT NO DOUBT. WELL, THAT MAKES MY TASK EASIER.



HE BEGAN REMOVING THE NET.



AS HE WAS BUSY FOLDING IT—



THE DEER SPRANG UP AND MADE OFF.



ANNOYED AT HAVING BEEN TRICKED, HE FLUNG HIS CLUB.

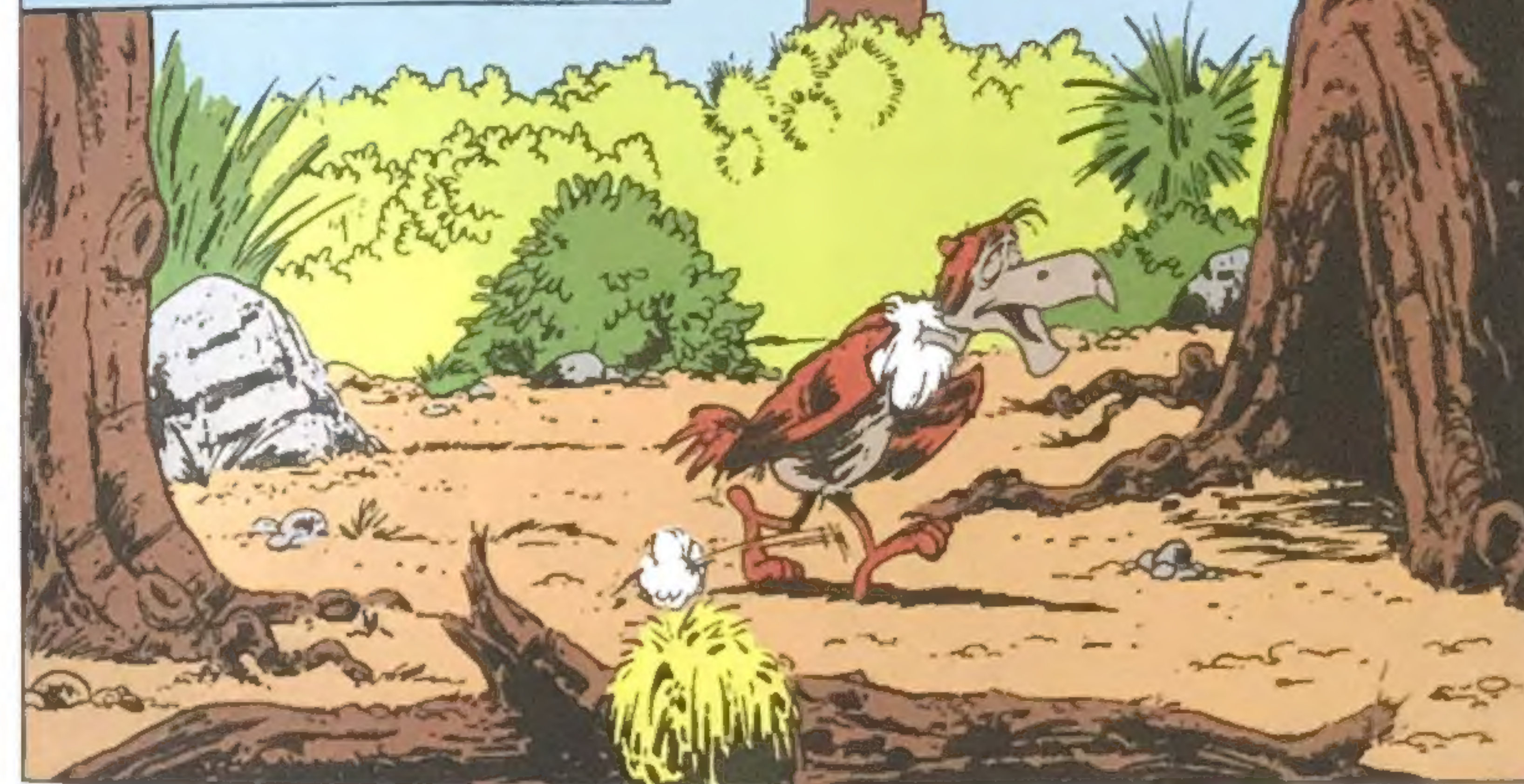


IT HIT THE JACKAL AND KILLED HIM ON THE SPOT.



THE VULTURE, THE CAT AND THE BIRDS

ONE DAY A BLIND OLD VULTURE CAME TO LIVE IN THE HOLLOW OF A TREE, WHERE BIRDS ROOSTED AT NIGHT.



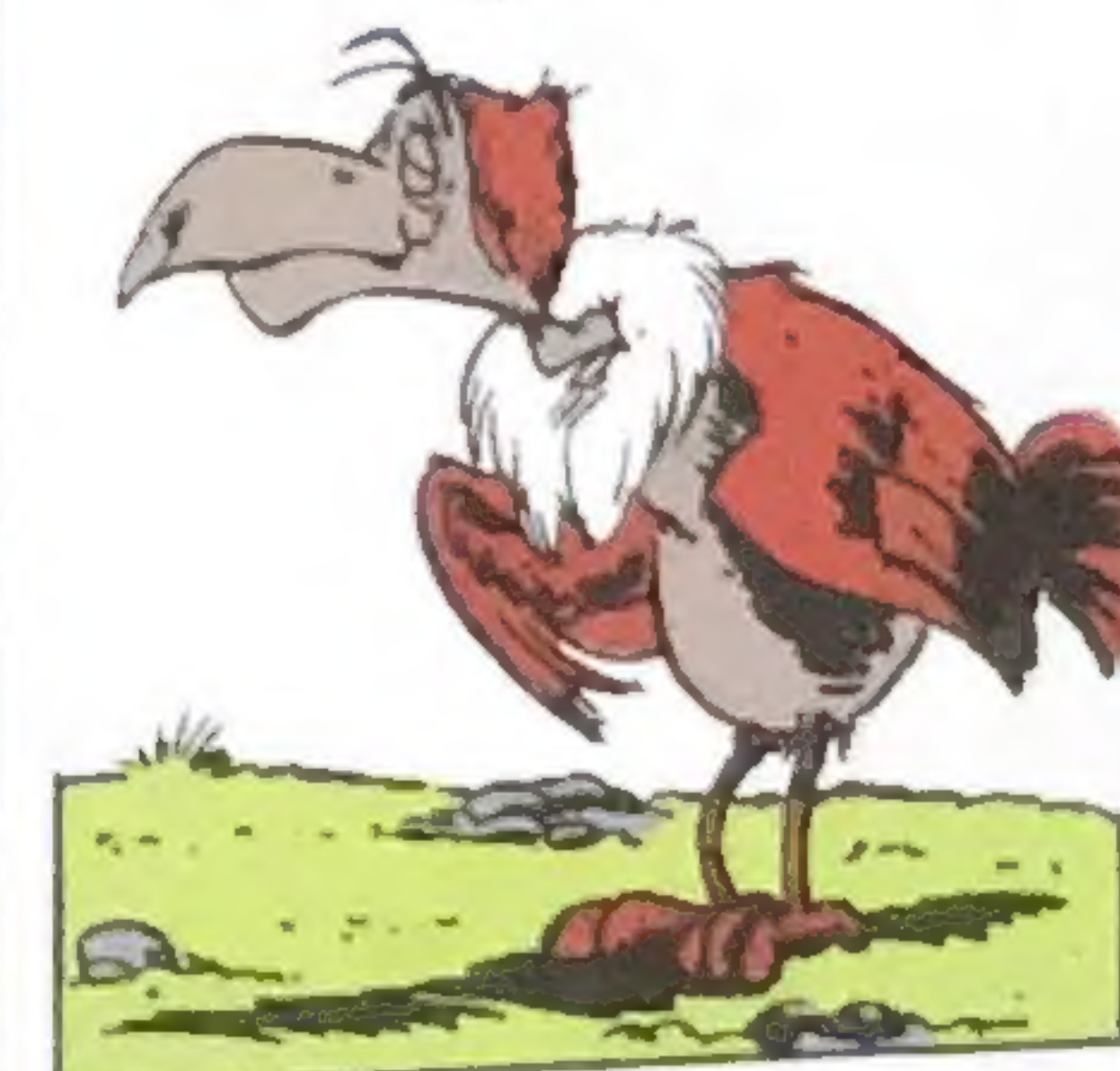
THE BIRDS HELD A HURRIED CONFERENCE.

POOR OLD BIRD. HE CAN HARDLY MOVE AROUND. LET US GIVE HIM A SHARE OF OUR FOOD OR ELSE HE WILL SOON DIE OF STARVATION.



THE OLD VULTURE WAS TOUCHED BY THEIR KINDNESS.

I SHALL MAKE IT MY DUTY TO PROTECT THEIR YOUNG WHEN THEY ARE AWAY GATHERING FOOD.



ONE DAY A CAT HAPPENED TO PASS BY, WHEN THE BIRDS WERE AWAY. HE DID NOT SEE THE VULTURE WHO WAS NAPPING, PERCHED ON A HIGH BRANCH.



AHA! NESTS AND NESTS OF LITTLE FLEDGLINGS. FOOD ENOUGH FOR DAYS AND DAYS.



WHEN THE LITTLE BIRDS SAW THE CAT APPROACH, THEY SET UP SUCH A TWITTER THAT THE VULTURE WOKE UP.

HE SWOOPED DOWN.



WHO GOES THERE?

A VULTURE! OH! OH! I'M DONE FOR!

JUST THEN HE NOTICED SOMETHING.

OH! THE FELLOW'S BLIND, AND HIS TALONS BLUNT WITH AGE. WHAT A RELIEF.

WHO GOES THERE, SPEAK UP!



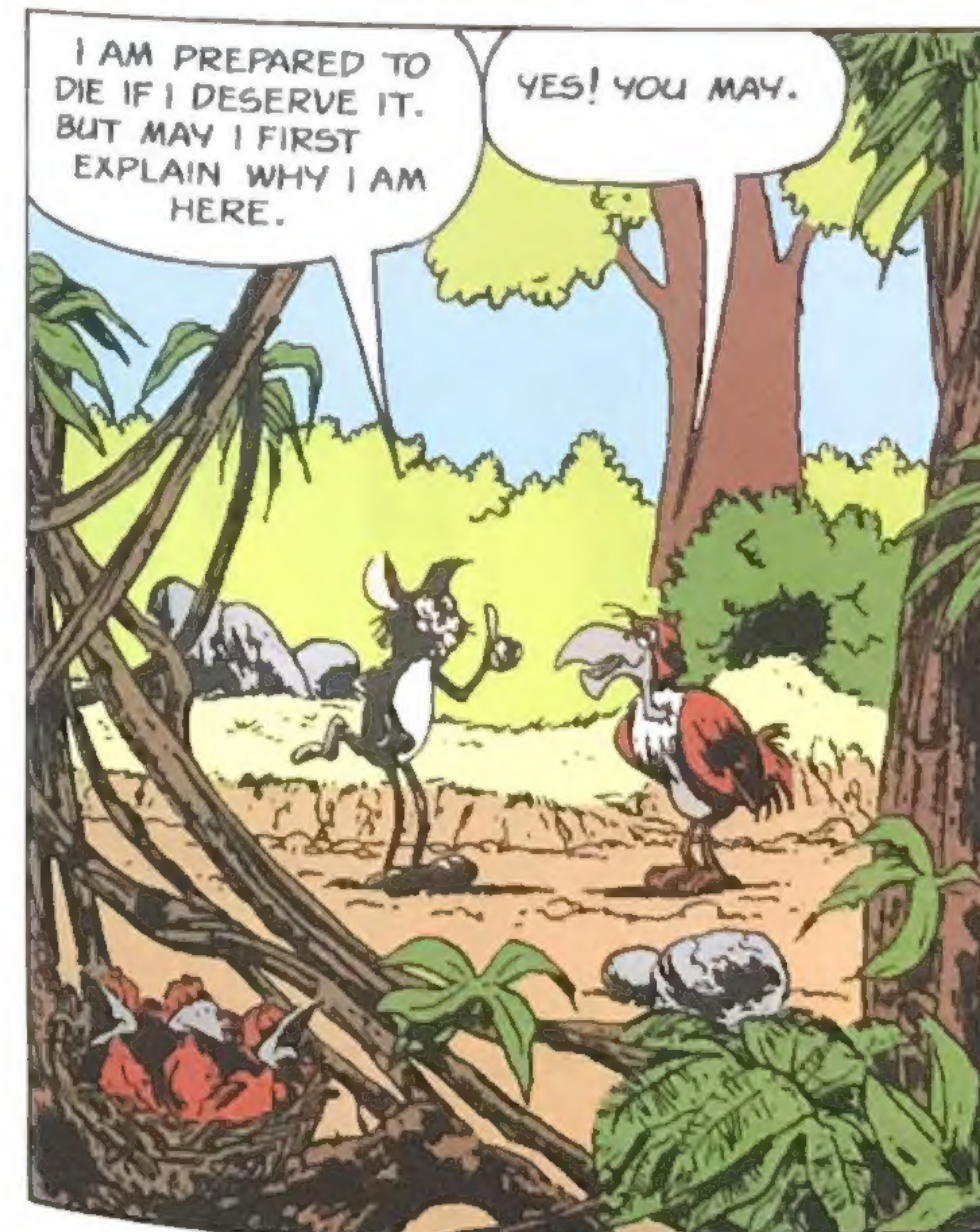
I AM A CAT.

BE OFF! OR I'LL SLAY YOU.



I AM PREPARED TO DIE IF I DESERVE IT. BUT MAY I FIRST EXPLAIN WHY I AM HERE.

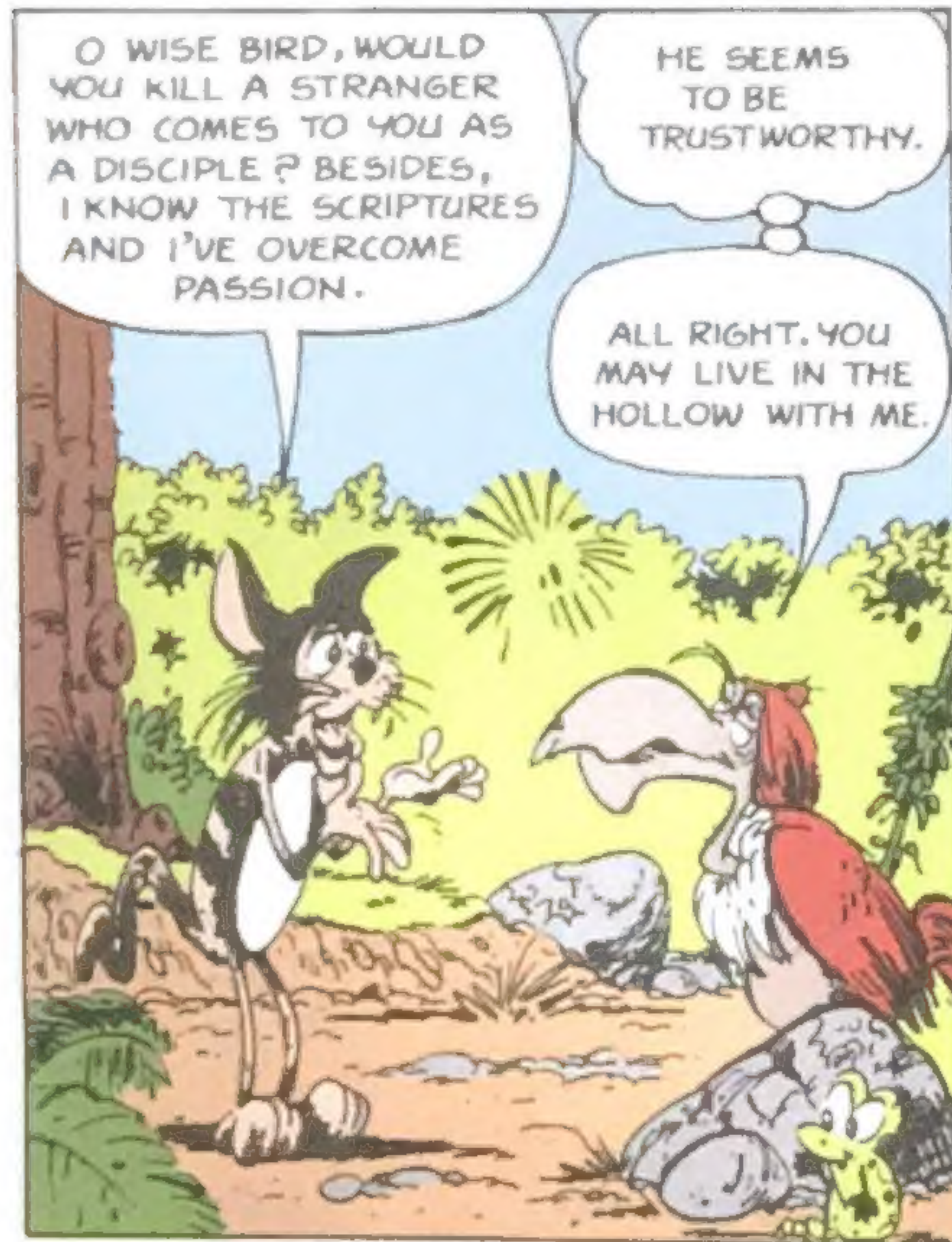
YES! YOU MAY.



I LIVE ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGA. THE BIRDS THERE CONSTANTLY SPEAK OF YOUR WISDOM AND YOUR LEARNING. I HAVE COME TO STUDY LAW FROM YOU.

YES. BUT CATS LIKE MEAT AND THERE ARE YOUNG BIRDS HERE. I WILL HAVE TO SLAY YOU.





CHOICE OF FRIENDS

